

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

COMMON-SENSE ETHICS
THE FUTURE OF MORALS
A CHARTER FOR RAMBLERS
LIBERTY TO-DAY
THE BOOK OF JOAD
(AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY)
AND VARIOUS PHILOSOPHICAL WORKS

THE DICTATOR RESIGNS

by

C. E. M. JOAD



METHUEN & CO. LTD. LONDON

36 Essex Street W.C.

First published in 1936

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

FOREWORD

FOR reasons which will subsequently appear, the early pages of this book are misleading. They are misleading not in the sense that they do not represent the author's state of mind when he began to write the book, but in the sense that they take no account of a change of heart that occurred during the writing of it, and have become something of an outrage in the light of the mood in which he finished it. I began this book in the full flood of dictatorial enthusiasm. This, I told myself, I would do for mankind and that, using human beings as raw material to be cut to the pattern of my schemes, as a topiarist cuts box hedges to the patterns of his imagination. But, as those of my readers who bear with me as far as p. 31 will discover, I became increasingly conscious, as the writing proceeded, of my wickedness and folly. Not even on paper, not even as an author's *jeu d'esprit*, was this playing with dictatorship tolerable. And so in mid-stream I changed my course, made my recantation and resigned my dictatorship. This being so, these early pages bear about as much relation to my later mood as the blasphemies of an unconverted bruiser bear to the pieties which succeed his conversion. I allow them to stand only that I may mortify my present political flesh by the ever-present warning

THE DICTATOR RESIGNS

of my past political iniquities, and by constant and visible reminder of the outrages, albeit only in imagination, of which I once deemed myself capable, keep myself more closely to the straight path of liberal and democratic virtue.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
FOREWORD	V
I. GENERAL PRINCIPLES	I
II. THE DICTATOR RESIGNS	27
III. THE BODY OF ENGLAND	34
IV. BIRTH, LOVE, AND DEATH	53
V. DOMESTIC POLICY	69
VI. FUN POLICY	75
VII. PRAISE, PAIN, FOOD, AND OTHER MATTERS	86
VIII. THE LARGER ISSUES	102

CHAPTER I

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

CAUSES OF HUMAN UNHAPPINESS

MY object as dictator would be to increase the happiness of human beings. The causes of human happiness are twofold. There are those which are internal and those which are external. Examples of internal causes are inner conflict, sense of guilt, lack of purpose, absence of belief, boredom, unrequited love. Some people, for example Mrs. Gummidge, are unhappy for no very obvious reason. That is the way God made them and that is all there is to be said about it. Others take pleasure in their own unhappiness. Unhappiness arising from internal causes a dictator, however wise and benevolent, can do little to remove. If you cannot make people good by Act of Parliament, you certainly cannot make them happy. Some part of the unhappiness which is due to internal causes may, indeed, be prevented by education, but those who are already its victims are already uneducable. The most that you can hope to do is so to educate their children, that they will grow up without the sense of shame and guilt which has poisoned the lives of so many of my generation.

Inevitably it is with the external causes of unhappiness that a dictator would be chiefly concerned.

THE DICTATOR RESIGNS

These are war, poverty, famine, pestilence, pain, disease, injustice, oppression, insecurity, fear. These I should hope in large measure to remove.

THE OPPORTUNITY OF MANKIND

For the moment at which I should be assuming my dictatorship is a particularly fortunate one. Throughout man's history, his life has been at the mercy of natural forces which he could neither understand nor control, forces which let loose upon him the calamities of fire and earthquake, of famine and flood; his communities have been swept by plagues and pestilences; he has been the prey of superstitious fears; with the sweat of his brow he has wrung a meagre sustenance from nature. It is comparatively rarely that he has had enough food to eat, a sufficiency of clothes to wear and a sufficiency of fuel wherewith to warm his dwelling. To-day, thanks to science, these disabilities belong to the past. Science, in conquering the forces of nature and harnessing them to man's use, has so increased human productivity that enough and to spare is now available for all, if men would only organize their political and economic systems to suit their new conditions. The enemies of human happiness are no longer without but within. It is not now to the physical sciences that we must look to improve the lot of man, but to the psychological. Our problem is no longer, How can we so command the forces

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

of Nature as to be able to provide enough food and shelter for mankind? It is rather, How can we so command human nature that the bounty which nature and science combine to provide can be distributed for the good of mankind? Because of our inability to devise a system of distribution appropriate to our increased powers of production, because, in other words, our social and political wisdom lag so far behind our scientific knowledge, the enormously increased productivity which we owe to science is at the moment a drawback rather than an asset. In peace we are in danger of economic collapse because we cannot control our powers of production, and in war of physical extermination because we cannot control our powers of destruction. For this reason, one of my first acts as dictator would be to call a halt to science.

A HALT TO SCIENCE

I have no objection to science as such. On the contrary, I think that its objectivity and impartiality are among the greatest achievements of the human mind. Nor am I disposed to praise the good old days before steam and electricity, wireless and the cinema, anaesthetics and disinfectants came to increase our mobility, to brighten our lives, and to relieve our pains. The fruits of science are of inestimable social benefit, or would be, if only we knew how to use them. But, alas, we do not.

THE DICTATOR RESIGNS

We live in a world in which there is a gulf which constantly grows wider between the development of human nature and the development of human power. The latter increases by leaps and bounds: the former lags hopelessly behind. The disparity makes our civilization fundamentally lopsided, and this lopsidedness, from being a public nuisance, has become a public danger.

Science has given us powers fit for the gods; yet we bring to their use the mentality of schoolboys. Look at that aeroplane humming across the sky. The knowledge of mathematics, of dynamics and mechanics, of electricity and internal combustion, the ingenuity in the application of this knowledge, the skill in the working of woods and metals, that have gone to its construction suggest a race of supermen; the intrepidity and courage of the early flying-men were the qualities of heroes. Now consider the purposes for which the modern aeroplane has been and seems increasingly likely again to be used. To drop bombs that shatter and burn and choke and poison and dismember defenceless people. These, one feels, are the purposes of idiots or devils. Science has made modern men so enormously dangerous to one another that, unless they learn to behave very much better in the future than they have done in the past, they will destroy themselves and their civilization through sheer inability to control the powers that science has given them. We cannot, the fact is obvious, afford

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

another European war, if our civilization is to survive. Yet we have not, it seems, the social wisdom to take the steps which are necessary to avert the impact of the enormous destructiveness with which modern science has endowed us.

Again, men are more important than machines, the cultivation of human values than the acquisition of material wealth. These truths are familiar; from the beginning of time religion has insisted upon them. Yet so far does the level of our morals and religion fall below the level of our knowledge, that in our ruthless application of the results of scientific research to industrial processes we are prepared to let human beings starve and human values go to the wall.

Now we cannot, I think, blame the scientists. The spirit of inquiry bloweth where it listeth, and they must follow where it leads. It is not their fault, if the inventions of the last thirty years have been inventions which have displaced labour, rather than labour-creating inventions which, by stimulating new demands, have provided labour. We cannot, I repeat, blame the scientists. But until the community is ready to use instead of to misuse their discoveries, we can at least stop them. I should call a halt to science for the next ten years, or, rather, while permitting scientific research to continue, I should propose to make it a criminal offence during that period for any scientist to communicate his results either to War Offices or to business men.

THE DICTATOR RESIGNS

THE SIMPLIFICATION OF LIFE

Apart from the salutary effects of withholding from society gifts which it has not the morality to distribute or the wisdom to enjoy, the benefit to individuals would, I am convinced, be considerable. The application of science to human life has made the contemporary generation practically incapable of amusing itself. We have forgotten how to sing and play; we put on the gramophone. We have forgotten how to walk; we get into the car or the bus. We have forgotten how to talk; we turn on the radio, enjoying the cheap, standardized pleasures which it pays somebody to provide for everybody, instead of providing individual pleasures for ourselves.

Science has multiplied our wants and increased the complexity of our lives. Increasingly we demand that everything should be done for us. Increasingly we live a 'press-the-button' existence. A drastic simplification of life would improve our health, our minds and our characters. Hence I should arrest this spate of inventions which multiply so embarrassingly upon us the *means* to the good life, in the hope that people might have time to find out how to live. I should stop the scientists from gratifying with their gadgets and their mechanisms our alleged wants, in order that we might have leisure to determine what our wants really are.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

MY PROBLEM PSYCHOLOGICAL

From all this it follows that the real problem which, as dictator, I recognize I should have to solve is psychological. The material means for human happiness exist, if only people could be induced rightly to use them. But, as I have insisted, they do not rightly use them. On the contrary, they pursue policies and entertain desires which are inimical to their own happiness. How can they be induced to modify these policies and to change these desires? Only, I would suggest, by education. You can change human nature, but only on condition that you catch it young. My business as dictator would, therefore, be to impose by force upon the existing generation those political and social arrangements which the next would be educated to desire. I am, in general, a disbeliever in force, and opposed, therefore, to dictatorships. In thus violating my convictions for the good of society, I should endeavour to comfort myself with four reflections.

I. THAT HUMAN BEINGS ARE STUPID

The ills from which humanity suffers seem to me to be due less to the hardness of men's hearts than to the thickness of their heads. It is not so much because men are wicked as because they are stupid, that the world is as it is. The individual

THE DICTATOR RESIGNS

men and women that one meets are, it is obvious, not wicked. On the contrary, they are for the most part decent, kindly folk who do what they can to diminish human suffering and will often go to considerable lengths in the matter of personal inconvenience in order to assist those who are in trouble. Yet if one considers the affairs of mankind collectively and in the mass, if one takes, in short, a glance at human history, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that men are devils, or are at least intermittently animated by devils. For example, during a period of twenty-seven months from 1482 to 1484 two thousand males and females of the human species were burnt alive in public in the city of Seville by those who believed that by tormenting God's creatures for a short period in an earthly fire they were saving them from an eternity of torment in an infernal one. In the Great War of 1914 to 1918 men killed ten million and mutilated twenty-three million of their number in the belief that by these actions they were defending national honour, safeguarding the rights of small nations, preserving democracies, protecting hearths, homes, kings, wives, children, and what not. The motives that led men to inflict these appalling sufferings upon one another were not evil. On the contrary, they were on balance good, entailing in those who were animated by them the virtues of self-sacrifice, loyalty, bravery, and devotion. But the beliefs which evoked the display of these virtues

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

were almost certainly false. It is, for example, highly improbable that a good God enjoys the roasting of His creatures. It is not the case that democracy, kings, wives, and the rest were in fact protected by the methods adopted in war. It is not, therefore, necessary for a dictator wishing to inaugurate a millennium to change men's hearts, but it is necessary for him to brighten their wits, so that their idealism may no longer be exploited by selfish interests which induce them to lay down their lives in the defence of what they falsely believe to be right and justice.

Not only are people stupid: they are exceedingly unimaginative, or, rather, their imaginations, particularly the imaginations of women, are lacking in range. I have seen a woman who would shrink from killing a wasp, go out of her way to avoid hurting a fly, and dissolve in an ecstasy of voluble compassion over a dog whose leg had been run over in the street, receive with sublime indifference the announcement that during the preceding seven months two million people had died of famine in China, or that a number of Ukrainian peasants had been flogged to death by Poles during the 'pacification' of the Polish Ukraine. It is almost as if suffering were not conceded to be suffering, unless it occurs within the same territorial area as that which happens to be occupied by oneself, or to persons living under a form of government of which one's political opinions happen to approve.

THE DICTATOR RESIGNS

People's imaginations are no less lacking in perspective than they are limited in range. Let a calamity occur on a sufficiently large scale and they will be completely unable to realize the degree of suffering which it entails. This defect on the part of the human imagination plays a large part in the causation of war. Thus at the time of the Passchendaele slaughter in the last war, I can remember people writing to the papers insisting that something ought to be done to stop the continuous barrage of shells with which the Passchendaele offensive began on the ground that it was interfering with the habits of migrating birds, and I have little doubt that there were those who complained of the submarine campaign because it tended to endanger the lives and disturb the habits of fish. It is these defects of imagination which are responsible for a large part of human stupidity. Hence, I repeat, it is because they are stupid rather than because they are cruel or unjust, that men subscribe to the appalling cruelties and injustices which are perpetrated upon their fellow-men. They simply fail to realize what these cruelties and injustices mean.

2. THAT HUMAN BEINGS ARE EDUCABLE

Secondly, in spite of the fact that the sufferings of mankind are due to their stupidity rather than to their wickedness, that their defects are in fact intellectual rather than moral, I believe that they are at

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

bottom rational, and, because rational, teachable. There are moods in which, looking back over human history, one is tempted at times to take the view that men are incorrigible, that they will never learn. Justifiable in moments of irritation, this view cannot commend itself to serious reflection. Consider, for a moment, the evils that have disappeared from the lives of men. Witchcraft and cholera, slavery and gladiatorial games and torture.¹ Each of these evils must, at the time of its prevalence, have seemed, as war seems to-day, to be irremediable. Human nature being what it is, you could not, men must have said—men in fact did say—abolish slavery. But you did. How was the change effected? By appeals to men's sense of justice, to their compassion, above all to their reason. Now the efficacy of these appeals to reason depends upon the educability of mankind. If men are not teachable, if they cannot and will not learn, then it is no use appealing to their reason. But sometimes, in spite of all the evidence to the contrary, it is.

The situation in the Middle Ages in regard to plague was not unlike the contemporary situation in regard to war. The communities of Europe were swept by repeated pestilences which decimated the population. Just as men beset the statesmen of to-day and ask them how to cure war,

¹ Unfortunately, as the recent history of Germany, Italy, and Russia has shown, the disappearance of torture has been only temporary.

THE DICTATOR RESIGNS

so they flocked to the doctors of the fourteenth century and asked them how to cure plague. And just as the statesmen of to-day offer, when approached, an infinite variety of different and self-contradictory proposals, so that wherever there are seven statesmen gathered together there are there eight opinions, so did the doctors of the Middle Ages offer a bewildering miscellany of cures that were no cures. And because no doctor knew of any cure each professed to know of a different cure. Perhaps the most popular of all the accredited methods of meeting the situation was the method of prayer. People crowded into the churches and prayed God to avert the pestilence, thereby providing the best possible conditions for the spread of contagion.

But though the doctors could not tell the people what steps to take to cure the plague, they could tell them what steps to take if they wished to avoid it. 'The position,' they said in effect, 'is perfectly simple. If you wish to prevent plague, keep sewage out of your water.' And in due course, when they had suffered badly enough and long enough, suffered for several hundred years to the tune of several million lives, human beings saw the doctors' point, devised a system of sanitation and ceased to suffer from plagues. And the inference? That human beings really are teachable. If they are suffering from some palpable evil, and if you can show them how the evil may be prevented, then

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

when the evil has continued long enough and they have suffered badly enough, provided that you have in no way relaxed your efforts at demonstration but have continued to entreat them, arguing the while patiently, cogently, and persuasively in favour of the means of prevention that lie to hand, you can in the end induce them to do what is necessary to save themselves. In the end men will always see the point; and in the end they will see the point of disarmament, if they wish to avoid war, as they saw the point of sanitation, when they wished to avoid the plague. But it will take them a long time yet and they will probably have to suffer a great deal more in the process.

3. THAT HUMAN BEINGS CHANGE

Thirdly, it is not the case that human nature does not change. It changes naturally, and it can be changed deliberately. It changes naturally by the mere lapse of time and process of evolution. That there is very little difference between the crowds of ancient Babylon and modern Shoreditch, I agree. But lengthen the time scale, and look not at the crowds of Babylon and Shoreditch but at Neanderthal man and the British Cabinet. (I take the British Cabinet as containing a good average sample of modern civilized persons, neither better nor worse, more intelligent nor less, than the general run of their fellows.) The difference is enormous;

THE DICTATOR RESIGNS

yet the one has evolved by continuous if imperceptible degrees from the other.

Human nature can also be changed deliberately, provided also that you take it in hand young enough, as the Bolsheviks have done. It is in no sense the case that the young Russian of to-day, toiling in the sweat of his brow for Socialism, reverencing machines, endowing the manual worker with a mystical nobility in order the better to despise the ignobility of the black-coated clerk, rationalist and materialist, with a contempt for the supernatural, a disbelief in God and a simple faith in science—it is not the case, I say, that the contemporary young Russian is the same sort of creature as his predecessor of fifty years ago, who was innocent of science, had a simple faith in God, revered the Tsar, was so ignorant of machines that he had only to touch them and they rebelled—nothing, it was said, in Tsarist Russia ‘worked’—and, when he consented to notice its existence at all, dismissed manual work as an occupation worthy only of serfs. The change has been deliberately produced by unremitting propaganda, some of which is called education, on the part of the Bolsheviks.

Again, nobody would maintain that the Victorian young lady, dedicated to embroidery and her parents, given to pen painting and vapours, and devoting all the energies of her being to the business of attracting a number of young men as a preliminary to catching one of them and one only, is the same sort

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

of creature as the contemporary girl who—but it is unnecessary to describe the contemporary girl. This change is the result of a number of factors, only some of which are conscious. There is a change in environment brought about by science, the natural reaction of one age from the standards of its predecessor, a reaction intensified in the present instance by the war; there is the so-called emancipation of women. Of these factors, only the last may be said to be conscious and deliberate. As to the reality of the change, however, there can be no doubt, and if tastes, sentiments, values, aspirations, hopes, desires and thoughts are what constitute human nature, these changed tastes, sentiments, values, and the rest mean changed human nature.

4. THAT HUMAN BEINGS' CHANGEABILITY HAS INCREASED, IS INCREASING AND WILL BE STILL MORE INCREASED

Fourthly, the instruments by means of which human nature can be consciously changed have never been so numerous or so potent as at the present time. In the past the methods of changing human nature have been mainly reducible to two. There has been the method of force and there has been the method of moral exhortation. The method of force has been largely employed by governments, both civil and religious. It may be broadly defined

THE DICTATOR RESIGNS

as that of producing a conviction of the truth of certain opinions, namely, your opinions, the desirability of certain values and the correctness of certain tastes, namely, your values and tastes, by the infliction of discomfort, amounting frequently to gross physical agony, upon those who have ventured to disagree with your opinions, or are unable to subscribe to your values or to share your tastes. When the agony has continued long enough, the sufferer professes himself convinced that your opinions are right, your values the only possible values and your tastes the only tolerable tastes. I do not wish to underrate the effectiveness of this method; on the contrary, I believe that if it is carried out long enough and ruthlessly enough, it can be made completely effective. It is not the case that you cannot break the spirit of a people or a sect by persecution. The Albigenses, for example, were simply wiped out by the Inquisition as a result of the wars and persecutions of the thirteenth century. In our own times similar methods have been employed with scarcely less effect against Socialists and Communists in Germany and Italy. I should, however, find myself precluded from using this method by the general principle which I announced in the first sentence of this book, namely, that the main purpose of my dictatorship would be to make people happy. Now you do not make people happy by hurting them; besides—I hope that the confession will not set my readers, especially my

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

young readers, against me—I do not like hurting people. I should not, therefore, be able to make the deliberate use of force an instrument of normal policy, although I might find myself driven to fall back upon the employment of force against unregenerate individuals in cases of emergency. There are, after all, gangsters, lunatics and mad dogs, and in certain circumstances one has to shut them up. In my view, the man who desires war or pursues policies which are deliberately aimed at war is socially a mad dog, just as the man who hurtles by you in a sports car at sixty miles an hour roaring at the rear is a social lunatic. Both are public nuisances, and I would, therefore, suppress them. This, however, is to anticipate.¹

The method of moral exhortation has usually been employed by the exponents of religion. But it seems to be of very little value. For two thousand years from a hundred thousand pulpits and in uncountable books men have exhorted other men to be meek, kindly and unselfish, to resist evil not with a contrary evil but with good, not to resort to violence and not to set store by the treasures of this world, with the result that by and large the beliefs, values, tastes, and conduct of a twentieth-century crowd are morally indistinguishable from those of fifth-century Athens. In this respect, the method of moral exhortation seems to me to be

¹ See Chapter III, pp. 39–41, for the defence and development of this heterodoxy.

THE DICTATOR RESIGNS

vastly inferior to that of rational argument. You can, as I have already urged, persuade people's reasons that so and so is true, even when you cannot convince their moral senses that it is right. Or, rather, to convince the moral sense is not enough, since the conviction 'this is right and ought to be done' does not entail the doing of it. It is, therefore, the more unfortunate that reformers have so frequently chosen to address their appeals to men's sense of right, rather than their arguments to men's sense of truth.

THE MANUFACTURE OF MEN'S MINDS AND CHARACTERS

In the modern world both the traditional methods of changing human nature have been rendered obsolete by the new power which science has given to men's rulers to cast the minds of their subjects into whatever moulds they please. And not only their minds, but their characters! Already, by suitably conditioning the secretions of the ductless glands, we can make men strongly or weakly sexed, independent or docile, choleric or timid at will. By injections of thyroid we can render a congenital imbecile capable of grasping the fact that 7 multiplied by 7 equals 49. Conversely, we can turn a genius into an idiot. All the evidence goes to show that this control which science has enabled men to exercise over the minds and characters of their

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

fellows through manipulating their bodies will be enormously increased in the future. Nor is physiology the only science concerned. As the knowledge which psychologists obtain of the method of conditioning reflexes grows, there seem good grounds for supposing that it will become possible to produce in citizens almost at will whatever psychological attitudes seem desirable both in regard to public policy and to private affairs, thus ensuring that they will extend to public announcements a uniform welcome, and endure private misfortunes with an unvarying patience. Pavlov can make a dog's mouth water by striking a gong. He gives it an electric shock or sticks a pin into its rump, and it wags its tail or jumps with pleasure. The results which Professor Watson has achieved in conditioning the responses of babies are less sensational only because in dealing with babies the experimenter has not a free hand. Pavlov does more or less what he likes with his dogs; but the objections of the babies' mothers assign at present very definite limits to the conditioning of their offspring's reactions. Fear, according to Professor Watson, is the baby's unconditioned response to the feeling of being left suddenly without support. Now, the number of mothers who have so far been willing to allow their babies to be left suddenly without support, thus enabling fear to be evoked at will in later life as a result of conditioning the fear response by associating other stimuli in babyhood with the

THE DICTATOR RESIGNS

unconditioned stimulus for fear, has so far proved limited. However, there would be no maternal nonsense of that kind in my dictatorial State, nor, if the milder methods to be described in a moment fail, should I hesitate to exploit the resources of science to the full in my efforts to make men reasonable, and to assist them to live those kinds of lives which pay the highest dividends in terms of satisfaction. It is, after all, the function of a dictator to govern his subjects for their own good—is he not known as ‘the father of his people’?—and if they do not like what is good for them, he must change their natures until they do. Nor, as Huxley’s *Brave New World* showed, is there any reason to delay the process of conditioning until after birth. It may precede it. However, I doubt whether anything so drastic as pre-natal conditioning would really be required. The powers of direct attack upon the human mind with which science has endowed the modern dictator are so great that the manipulation of the responses of their bodies would probably prove an unnecessarily roundabout method.

ADVERTISEMENT AND THE WIRELESS

Consider, for example, the method of advertisement. If I were to announce on the platform at a public meeting that I was the most modest man in England, few would believe me. But if I had a

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

couple of millions to spend in placarding every hoarding in the country with a notice informing all comers that 'Mr. C. E. M. Joad is the most modest man in England', by the end of six months large numbers of my fellow-citizens would become convinced that I had an abnormal shrinking from publicity. It is, indeed, impossible to over-estimate the power which, under modern conditions, may be obtained by a suitably ruthless use of the instruments of propaganda. Education is the lever by means of which the dictator prizes open the heads of his citizens. The Press, the wireless, and the cinema are the instruments by means of which he proceeds to fill them. For it is education that gives the power to read, and so renders the mind accessible to the influence of the written word; it is through the Press that the written word is brought to bear. It is education that gives the power to assimilate information without the ability to criticize it; it is by means of the wireless and the cinema that the information is conveyed. These new instruments of propaganda are the veritable moulders of the modern mind. Not only do they enable the ruler to address the minds of all his citizens simultaneously, but he can enhance his words with all the glamour that comes from mass suggestion and shared emotion. Hitler and Roosevelt are the only rulers who have as yet even begun to exploit the full possibilities of the wireless. When Hitler, in the spring of 1934, announced his new works

THE DICTATOR RESIGNS

programme for the unemployed he spoke simultaneously over the wireless to 19,500 meetings. It is estimated that at these meetings three and a half million Germans listened to the voice of the Leader.

But these things are only for adults, and adults, even in the bravest of all possible brave new worlds, are only limitedly suggestible. As I have already hinted, it is upon his ability to mould the minds of the children, that the power of the dictator must chiefly rest. It is, therefore, in education that in the long run I should chiefly place my trust.

THE PRESS AND THE CINEMA

Nor should I forget the Press. You can always propagate a propaganda if you have the proper geese, and there is no more effective geese-maker than the modern journalist. It is the Press which enables people to cure themselves of diseases by applying remedies which have no merit except that of being advertised, to enjoy books of which they cannot understand a page because they have been praised by the critics, and to go into raptures over pictures and music which they find meaningless, because picture-dealers and concert-managers have conducted an efficient publicity campaign in their support. The Press persuades people that they enjoy games they have never played, are interested in personalities they have never seen, and ought

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

to advocate policies which will produce the very reverse of the ends they desire; and it can do all this even when it is hampered, as it is to-day, by the disability of speaking with the many voices of its many proprietors. Under my dictatorship it would speak with only one voice, and, when unanimity is added to assertiveness, who shall stand against it?

Moreover, I would see that it was bought! 'In Memmingen (not far from Stuttgart), a man who refused to buy a copy of Streicher's *Stürmer* that was offered to him was sentenced to two months' imprisonment.' An admirable hint which I should not hesitate to take.

As for the cinema, what influence can be more potent than one which induces people to flock in their hundreds of thousands to applaud on the screen in pictures of military tattoos and bombing aeroplanes, of gun practices and naval manœuvres, the instruments that are being perfected for their own destruction? Beglamoured by the magic of the news reel, men gape at the guns as at the most praiseworthy and admirable of human inventions. It never seems to occur to them, as they sit in that cosy darkness, that the mechanisms they admire may one day be used against themselves. Who, then, can doubt the power of the pictures?

Thus the whole movement of modern science appears to have been designed with the sole purpose of increasing my powers over the minds and through the minds over the bodies of my subjects. The

THE DICTATOR RESIGNS

rapidity of modern transport makes for centralization, and centralization is one of the conditions of efficient autocracy. Men move faster and faster and, as a consequence, they are more closely and frequently brought together. The atmosphere engendered by the assemblage of masses of men breeds the herd spirit, and the herd spirit is the lightning conductor which carries the dynamism of the dictator's power. Nor should I hesitate deliberately to invent occasions for the gathering of my subjects. Circuses and inspections, proclamations and performances—these would be the means of maintaining at a pitch of feverish enthusiasm the emotions of my people. For if these things can be done in the green wood, and they are done widely on the Continent to-day, what cannot be done in the dry?

MY GREATEST INSTRUMENT, EDUCATION

I have referred more than once to the importance of education to the dictator. Catch your citizen young enough, and, as the Russians and the Germans have discovered, you may form his tastes, his values and his beliefs at will, so that he will come to believe that the highest duty of man is to kill upon the battle-field and the highest duty of woman to provide material for the killing, that an ex-house-painter is a god and that all Socialists are wicked, or, alternatively, that there is no God, that Karl Marx is His prophet and that all non-Socialists are

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

wicked, according to whether he is born in a bedroom in the neighbourhood of the 14th or the 50th meridian east longitude. The effort of educationists 'must be to produce the man political, who in all thoughts and actions is rooted in his nation and inseparably attached to its history and faith. Objective truth is secondary and not always to be desired' (Dr. Frick, German Minister of the Interior). 'I expect from the teachers that they give to their pupils the fundamental principles of the philosophy and the idea of National Socialism. . . . Not to remain neutral and objective in the school, not to make the child into a cold observer, but to awaken in him enthusiasm and passion. It is a question of eternal and divine values, not one of cold reality' (Herr Rust, Prussian Minister of Education). These quotations will serve to indicate with sufficient clearness what may be expected of education under a dictatorial government—what may be expected, and what is also achieved. Subject the defenceless minds of the young to the continuous pressure of the same ideas, carefully protect them from any contact with contrary ideas, and, in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, they will come to adopt these ideas, and, if required, be prepared to make the world extremely uncomfortable for all who refuse to adopt them. For the ordinary man—the fact is, alas, only too clear—does not want to form his beliefs on morals and politics for himself. He is content to get them, as he gets his boots and

THE DICTATOR RESIGNS

his clothes, ready-made from the social shop, donning with equanimity a suit of atheistical materialism, ideological Socialism, and racial equality from the establishment in Moscow, and a suit of Germanicized Christianity, nationalist militarism, and racial exclusiveness from the rival establishment in Berlin. As for the hundredth man, I doubt whether I should have very much difficulty in liquidating him. He would almost certainly begin to develop a habit of 'committing suicide while trying to escape!' No! I have little doubt that I shall find the task of persuading men to adopt my view of what is good for them only too fatally easy.

CHAPTER II

THE DICTATOR RESIGNS

THEFTS OF MINDS AND THEFTS OF BODIES

I HAVE just read what I have written and I know that I can never be a dictator. For I find the methods that I have just described unutterably and intolerably repulsive. They are methods which, I know, are being widely and increasingly used on the Continent. In a hundred ways men's minds are being shaped and manufactured. In a hundred ways they are being mutilated, lopped, and twisted so that they may fit into the Procrustean bed of received opinion. It may well be the case—I incline to believe that it is the case—that only by such methods can a modern dictator survive. But, if it is the case, then dictatorship is not for me. I expressed above my dislike of the method of force. But the greatest objection to force from the point of view of the user of force is its comparative ineffectiveness. By force you can coerce men's bodies, but you cannot compel their minds. If you hurt a man enough you can make him do what you wish, but you cannot make him think what you wish. In fact, the probable effect of your hurting him is to make him think the opposite of what you wish. But the methods of modern science are far more effective than physical force. They aim not so

THE DICTATOR RESIGNS

much at coercing men's bodies as at stealing their minds. Now the theft of a man's mind is more valuable to a dictator than the coercion of his body. To control a man's mind is to control his body also, since, if he thinks what you please, he will do as you please. But to force his body is not to control his mind. Moreover, so soon as force ceases to be employed against his body, then, provided the mind be still free, his body will again act as seems good to him and not as seems good to you. While their minds are free, the dictator needs an army of spies and policemen to watch men's bodies. But once he has stolen their minds, he can safely leave them to their own devices in the assurance that the movements of their bodies will be such as he desires.

MEN AND SHEEP

For these reasons the methods of the modern dictatorships, which aim at the mass manufacture of minds, seem to me to be far more effective than the methods of the dictatorships of old, which aimed at the mass coercion of bodies. More effective to what end? To the end that the will of the dictator shall operate unhindered throughout the community. Citizens, in fact, may be brought by the effective use of education, propaganda, publicity, and advertisement to a state of acquiescence in all that the dictator enjoins.

But are they in fact citizens? Are they not rather

THE DICTATOR RESIGNS

sheep? For at this point one must look at the debit side of the account. If you stand a sheep on its hind legs, you do not turn it into a man. But if you stand a flock of sheep on their hind legs, you do turn them into something like a regiment, or a mob, or a crowd.

I am one of those who value individuality. I think that it is in the differences between human beings that both their value and their attractiveness reside. That a community from which variety had disappeared would be a community without charm, and that life in such a community would be a tired and a tiring life, the records of life under dictatorships in the past amply demonstrate. Now liberty is an indispensable condition of the development of individuality; the liberty to think one's own thoughts, to speak one's own mind, to develop one's personality along its own lines and according to its own nature, the liberty, in a word, to realize all that one has it in one to be.

Now liberty would disappear as a result of the methods I have described, and with liberty would go individuality. I should, then, be left in undisputed control over those who were no longer worth controlling. I should exercise my will without let or hindrance, but I should exercise it upon robots and upon sheep. I might add to the happiness of my subjects, but the happiness would be no longer worth enjoying, since my subjects would no longer be adult men and women.

THE DICTATOR RESIGNS

LIBERTY AND PERSONALITY

I began this book by announcing that my object as dictator would be to increase the happiness of my subjects, subjects whom, in my ignorance of the lengths to which my dictatorial trend of thought would lead me, I then innocently called citizens. I must now qualify my announcement with the assertion that happiness is not all. It is not all and it is not enough. There are also liberty, individuality and the development of the mind and spirit of man. 'It is better,' said John Stuart Mill, 'to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied.' Substitute the contemporary sheep for the traditional pig, and I agree with Mill. If, then, the price that I must pay for carrying my dictatorial measures into effect is the curtailment of the minds and the enfeeblement of the wills of my citizens, then the price is too high. If I can only be a dictator on condition that my subjects are diminished in respect of their full qualities as human beings, then I refuse to be a dictator. That all the papers should be owned by the State and no opinions be allowed expression except those which seem good to the State, seems to me a thing so evil as to outweigh any increase of public good that may grow from it. For in denying men the right to express all sorts of opinions and to hear the expression of all sorts of opinions, the State denies them the right to use their minds. In so doing, it abrogates their humanity,

THE DICTATOR RESIGNS

since by reason of his ability to think, by the possession, in a word, of a free mind, that man is chiefly differentiated from the animals. If the arts of persuasion, if the training of intelligence, if the patient and unremitting use of argument—‘these things I advocate because they will have such and such results and I can show you that these results are good’—were not sufficient to convince citizens of the value of what I propose, I could not bring myself to ensure their acquiescence either by stealing their minds or by tampering with their bodies.

UNFITNESS FOR DICTATORSHIP

In renouncing, as I do, those methods of psychological and physiological assault upon the minds and bodies of citizens which I have described, I may be—in fact I know that I am—confessing myself unfit to be dictator. Very well, then, I am unfit, and I hereby resign. Having resigned I shall not, after all, be able to carry into effect the proposals which follow, even though I were convinced—and I am convinced—that their enactment would bring the millennium appreciably nearer. Men, in fact, cannot be dictated into the millennium. They can only advance of their own free wills, and the rate of their advance is of an almost unendurable slowness. It is conditioned by the limitations of human nature, and human nature, as I have already insisted, is apt to be very, very stupid. Men do not—the fact is,

THE DICTATOR RESIGNS

alas, only too obvious—desire what they profess to desire, and the policies which they pursue are not such as to produce even what they desire.

Dictatorship, I conclude, is no job for a liberal. He sees that most of what will make for human happiness cannot be achieved, unless human beings learn to desire what will make them happy. Such learning entails a change in human nature. Now, human nature, as I have tried to show, can be changed scientifically by physiological and psychological methods. But from physiological and psychological assault he is precluded by his liberalism. Men's minds, at all costs, he must respect. He may educate them, but he may not manufacture them. Nor may he force their bodies.

MYSELF AS A MODERN ODYSSEUS

The would-be dictator, then, being a liberal, has resigned. For he cannot, he finds, use the dictator's methods. He may persuade men's minds, but he cannot tamper with them. His appeal is to reason, not to faith. His weapon is persuasion, not force. Hence, although I have followed the current political fashion to the extent of putting the modest proposals which follow in the form of dictatorial enactments—'I should,' I say, 'as dictator do this, that, and the other'; or sometimes, more modestly, 'I should, as dictator, *have done* this, that or the other'—I ask the reader to remember that these are mere

THE DICTATOR RESIGNS

forms of words, inspiring in appearance but empty of content. I use these words wistfully, as a concession to the prevailing fashion—wistfully, because there is so much that I know I could have done to knock a little sense into men's heads and to bring a little happiness into their lives, that, looking backwards over my dictatorial ambitions, I cannot but feel a certain nostalgia for the power which would have enabled me to realize them. Like Odysseus, I have stopped my ears against the siren voices of dictatorship and bound myself tightly to the mast of democracy. But as I strain against my self-imposed limitations, there will be audible now and then through the pages that follow the sound of creaking ropes. Nevertheless, let it be said here and now, I do indeed resign, and when all the froth of dictatorial phrases is blown away, what follows will stand revealed only as a list of proposals for the improvement of man's lot put forward by an impotent intellectual without either power or the chance of power.

CHAPTER III

THE BODY OF ENGLAND

ITS DESECRATION

LET us begin with the body of England; not because it is more important than its mind, its spirit, or its people, but because, as I write on this lovely May morning, it is uppermost in my mind. The English have the loveliest countryside of any people in the world. For this *we* can take no credit; for, with the exception of the landscape-gardeners of the eighteenth century who elaborately beautified the face of England, as a beautiful woman will by art make her face yet more beautiful, we did not ourselves make it. But we can destroy it: we can, and we do. The English have some lovely towns: they have also Cotswold villages and Essex farm-houses. But for these again *we* can take no credit. It was our ancestors who made them, and, since our great-grandfathers died, no Englishman, broadly speaking, has cared to make beautiful houses. The English, again, have lovely gardens. They may be found by trespassing in the grounds of any of our great country houses; they can also be found open to the public at Kew. But, once again, *we* did not plan them. These things that are beautiful are survivals from a past that cared for beauty. We have so little part in them that when a visitor comes from abroad,

THE BODY OF ENGLAND

as one has done in this present week, and says: 'Show me some modern architecture. I want to see what the modern English are doing to enrich their country', I must point to rows and rows of ugly little houses, spotting mile after mile of Kent and Surrey and Bucks, for all the world as if the fair face of England had caught measles and was coming out in an inflamed rash. I must point to our main roads, where noble trees have been cut down to make room for ignoble houses, and hoardings and garages and petrol pumps, shanties and huts and road-houses, traffic lights and Neon signs shut out the traveller from the view and encircle our towns in an iron grip of ugliness. I must point to the slums of East London, where ashpits reek under the windows of back-to-back houses. I must point, in a word, to the sea of ugliness with which this century and the last have submerged the land of England, and explain to him how our generation is ruining the country as effectively as the last ruined the towns. For we cannot—the fact is, alas, all too obvious—create beauty. When the Elizabethans built a village, it was as if stone flowered; when we create a suburb, it is as if a weed spawned. Nor can we contain our own ugliness. Once our towns had limits and a shape. Now they spread over the countryside in an amorphous sprawl of angry pink with such devastating rapidity that in twenty-five years' time the south of England will be neither town nor country, but a single scattered

THE DICTATOR RESIGNS

suburb sprawling to the coast. If anything could induce me to take up the dictatorship which I have in advance resigned, it would be the opportunity which supreme power would give me of stopping this wanton desecration of the beauty of England.

OUR NEW LOVE OF IT

A touch of wry comedy is given to the situation by the discovery on the part of this generation of England's countryside. Cheap public transport in the shape of electric trains and motor-coaches and the prodigious increase in the number of cheap private cars have for the first time given the middle and the lower middle classes access to the country. Those who cannot ride go on foot, and the growth of the youth hostels movement has made the joys of walking and the beauty of the English countryside known to hundreds of thousands who formerly spent their Sundays mewed up in towns awaiting the opening of the pubs and/or churches.

As a consequence, the present generation has a quickened appreciation of Nature which is not, however, sufficiently informed to prevent the defilement of that which it appreciates. Too often it contributes to it. Democracy is on calling terms with the country and leaves its visiting-cards in the shape of newspapers and paper bags. The hiker no less than the motorist deposits his scurf of cigarette packets and broken bottles; copses and heathlands

THE BODY OF ENGLAND

are destroyed by carelessly lit fires, and shacks, shanties and caravans spring up to provide shelter for the invaders. Thus the lovely face of England is increasingly covered by a sprawl of mean little buildings which leave their trail of vulgarity and shabbiness over an ever-widening area of field and hill-side. Our survey of the body of England leads, then, to two conclusions. First, having inherited the loveliest countryside in the world, we are in a fair way to transform it into a devastated area. Secondly, it is our very care for the country that causes us to maltreat it, so that the historian of the future, as he records the fate of contemporary England, will be moved to reflect that it is only those peoples who do not love the country who are likely to retain a countryside worth loving.

Our treatment of the countryside does not proceed from wickedness; nor is our apparent love for it a mere hypocrisy. It is because we are stupid and careless that we connive at its destruction. Either we do not notice that it is being destroyed, or we are too lazy to take steps to arrest the destruction we deplore. As dictator, I should have enacted a series of measures which would both have safeguarded as much of England's beauty as remains, and made it easily accessible to my citizens. As I have decided not to dictate, I can only commend what follows to those patriots who care for the beauty as well as for the glory of England.

THE DICTATOR RESIGNS

GENERAL PROPOSITIONS

I will begin with the announcement of certain general propositions. Beauty is important in and for itself. It needs neither justification nor advertisement. Since, moreover, it is valued and desired for its own sake, no reasons can be given for valuing and desiring beauty. It is, indeed, by the degree of its capacity for recognizing and enjoying beauty that the advance of our species may be most readily measured. Finally, the beauty of Nature is greater than that of art. So much for my general propositions!

Now for the deductions! First, if beauty is a value, its preservation is a trust—a trust bequeathed to us from our ancestors to be handed down unimpaired to our posterity. If in pursuit of its immediate pleasure or profit this generation squanders the beauty it has inherited, it is betraying this trust. Utility enforces what morality suggests. In a community whose economic system was designed to make the benefits of increased production accruing from science available for all, all citizens who cared to work would be assured of comfort and a competence in return for some three or four hours' machine-minding a day. How, it may be asked, are they to occupy their leisure? The problem, in any case, is a difficult one. It will become ten times more difficult, if we block the avenue to the chief and most lasting of the satisfactions of leisure, namely,

THE BODY OF ENGLAND

intercourse with Nature, and destroy the noblest employment of leisure, namely, work and play in the English countryside. We have all of us an instinctive craving for country sights and sounds and an instinctive need for occasional solitude. These things are coming, indeed, to constitute an increasingly important part of the good life for leisured citizens. Only the country can gratify this craving and fulfil this need. Nothing, then, is of such importance that it should be allowed to impair or to degrade that which is an essential condition of the good life. Nothing, not even cars! For the first of my measures for the preservation of the beauty of England is going to arouse the snorting opposition of the owners of cars.

ENACTMENTS

(1) I would have restricted private motor-cars to the use of certain carefully scheduled roads. I would not have permitted them within a ten-mile radius of the centre of London, or a five-mile radius of the centre of any large town, and I would seriously consider abolishing them altogether. (My main reason for not doing so, or not doing so at once, would be economic. If a method could be found for absorbing the displaced employees of the motor-car industry, I should be cheerfully prepared to abolish the industry.) What are the objections to such a measure?

THE DICTATOR RESIGNS

(a) That it would diminish human pleasure. But would it? Most of us have long ago discovered that motoring for pleasure is no pleasure at all. We drive engirt by the dreadful scenery of our new main roads in a little hell of noise and stench and ugliness; we do not see the country, but only the hinder parts of other cars, and we ruin our nerves. As for the pedestrian, his pleasure has been so spoiled by the car's practical usurpation of the roads, that he has been forced to give up road walking altogether and take to trespassing in woods and fields. It is only vicariously in literature that we can to-day savour the joys of road walking.

(b) That it would reduce speed. But would it? Already in our large towns traffic moves more slowly than it did before the introduction of cars. As an increasing number of cars is poured on to the roads every year (there are already over two million private cars in the country), the roads in the neighbourhood of towns will presently reach the same condition as the roads in towns. Thus, the logical conclusion of our present development is the covering of all the roads of the country with a stationary mass of metal wedged in a solid inextricable jam. As that condition is progressively approached, speed will progressively diminish.

(c) But even if it did not, what of it? To travel rapidly from place to place is not a good in itself. It is a good only in so far as it saves time for the realization of valuable ends in the places to which we

THE BODY OF ENGLAND

travel. Do we employ speed for that purpose? We do not. It will be recorded of the twentieth century that its men and women would move heaven and earth to gain five minutes and not have the faintest idea what to do with them when they had succeeded.

Advantages of the proposal would be:

(i) Diminution of death and injury from road accidents. Between six and seven thousand people a year now deprived of life would continue to live, and over 150,000 a year who are now living maimed and mutilated would live whole and complete.

(ii) Restoration of speed of movement in our cities.

(iii) Restoration of quiet to our countryside.

(iv) Restoration of the pleasure of walking on roads.

(v) Protection of roads from indiscriminate ribboning by road-houses, garages, tea-shops, refreshment shanties, hutments and bungalows.

(vi) Immunization of the countryside from continuous spread of the red rash.

(2) Next I would have set up a Commission of architects to plan Great Britain's country as a whole. The plan would begin by indicating which areas should be town, which country, which suburb. I would not permit any development in suburban or rural areas which was not consistent with the recommendations of the Commission. In other words, I would insist on a definite limit for towns and suburbs and permit no sprawling outside this

THE DICTATOR RESIGNS

limit. In some cases I would go further and require the demolition of already existing sprawls. This would incidentally entail the abandonment of the Garden City idea, and the housing of the bulk of the population in tall blocks of flats. These would occupy a small area, and, as a consequence, towns would be small, suburbs non-existent, and flat-dwellers would find the country at their doors, while their gardens and allotments, even when they did not actually surround the flats, would be at most a mile away from their cultivators.

(3) I would require the Planning Commission to set aside certain areas of Great Britain as National Parks—Snowdonia and the Lake District, parts of the Highlands, the Cotswolds, the New Forest, the Sussex Downs, the Yorkshire moors, and the Dukeries are obviously eligible. In these National Parks I would permit neither building nor development. The traditional occupations of these areas are agriculture, sheep-farming, forestry, and peat-cutting. These would be encouraged and maintained, but no new forms of occupation would be permitted to intrude. In the National Parks I would permit none of that killing for the sake of amusement which is called sport.

To the areas so set aside all citizens would have the right of access. Here they would be assured of country sights and sounds, solitude and the company of wild creatures. I should expect that the resultant general improvement in the health and

THE BODY OF ENGLAND

instinctive happiness of citizens would enormously increase the smooth running of the social machine.

(4) Pending the establishment of National Parks, I would pass into law the Access to Mountains and Moorlands Bill, giving citizens access to all uncultivated land and to all land above a certain height irrespective of the needs of sportsmen or the protests of owners. I would also buy up every big estate that came into the market, protect it from being broken up and built upon and preserve it as an amenity for my citizens.

ANIMALS

Before I leave the body of England, I have a word to say about animals. I have affirmed that my object as dictator, had I been able to assume the post, would have been to increase happiness. But I see no reason why the only happiness of which account should be taken is that of human beings. Nor, when human happiness is derived from the infliction of pain and humiliation upon animals or the enjoyment of the pain and humiliation inflicted by others, should I have felt any obligation to promote it.

I should, then, have prohibited—I would even now almost consent to be dictator in order to prohibit—exhibitions of performing animals. These, I am glad to say, are already on the wane. Men still behave like beasts in order that they may induce

THE DICTATOR RESIGNS

beasts to behave like idiots, but the taste for imbecility in wild creatures is not what it was. My abolition of the Zoo would no doubt have aroused a storm of resentment; nevertheless, I should have insisted upon it. Part of my objection to the imprisonment of animals is the fatuous sentimentality the prisoners engender in human beings. The accounts with which our brighter reporters enliven the daily papers of the matings and the quarrellings, the occupations and the meditations of the prisoners at the Zoo are among the most sickening features of modern journalism. The Zoo gives human beings limitless powers of espionage over the private lives of animals, and with the worst effects upon ourselves. To observe the habits of these publicly exhibited prisoners flatters our already grossly inflated sense of superiority. We enjoy the complacency of the jailer, elevate our small children upon the backs of big elephants, and make jokes at the expense of the creatures we degrade. I do not wish, however, to commit the sentimental error of supposing that the effect upon us is worse than the effect upon the animals. An eagle in a cage is a terrible sight, and the lifelong imprisonment of lions and tigers is not the least of man's outrages upon nature. The Roman lions did at least have a Christian breakfast; the prisoners of the Zoo have only the myriad, merciless eyes of their secure captors gazing, gazing, gazing, until the flesh rots and the heart breaks in the respectable prison. Once again, it is because

THE BODY OF ENGLAND

men are stupid rather than because they are cruel that they do these things; and, as dictator, I would have guaranteed in a single generation to educate human beings out of their taste for watching trapped animals.

BIRDS AND CAGES

With what pleasure too should I have forbidden the use of parts of animals for the purposes of female adornment. In all ages human beings have loved to deck themselves with portions of their fellow-creatures, and wings, heads, feathers, and in some cases stuffed bodies of wild birds are still worn about the person of the females of our species, who believe that by this means they will increase their attractiveness to males. The mention of birds reminds me that I should have forbidden their imprisonment in cages in order to minister to human pleasure. It is unfortunately the case that birds, when placed in a confined space behind metal bars, will sing sweetly, in order, no doubt, to show their pleasure in captivity. The sweetness of the song is found in certain cases to be increased, if the precaution is first taken of putting out the eyes of the bird, and many are blinded accordingly. Under my dictatorship, there would have been no birds in cages.

THE DICTATOR RESIGNS

TRAPS

Nor would there have been rabbits in traps. Night after night of this lovely month of May the country is rendered hideous by the cries of rabbits, dogs, cats, weasels, stoats, badgers and even birds, caught in steel traps. During certain months, two hundred thousand rabbits a night die in agony in steel traps in England alone. Every year thirty-six million rabbits are slowly tortured to death. Moreover, the traps do not discriminate. English animal lovers can never be sure that traps set for rabbits will not imprison their favourite spaniel. . . .

I once talked to a Canadian trapper, who told me that he made his living by the trapping of silver foxes. The area under his charge was so large that only once in three weeks was he able to make the round of the various traps which he had set. As a result, many hundreds of animals caught in traps died of hunger. Others gnawed themselves free by biting through the imprisoned leg. Others, lacking the sense to accomplish a deliberate amputation, would writhe and twist round and round until the tendons were pulled from the shoulder, the skin worn through and the bones broken. Nearly a quarter of the traps are found to contain only a severed limb. Steel traps persist because townspeople are ignorant of their use and because trap manufacturers, of whom there are from one hundred

THE BODY OF ENGLAND

and fifty to two hundred different firms, have a vested interest in their continuance. Moreover, trappers and gamekeepers are conservative.

PEERS AND PAIN

So are peers. On the day on which this is written (May 25th 1935), a quite startling number of backwoodsmen peers have abruptly made their appearance in the House of Lords. What is the reason for this phenomenon? A Bill has apparently been introduced for the abolition of steel traps, and the peers have flocked in their hundreds expressly to register their determination that the thirty-six million rabbits should continue to die painful and lingering deaths in this country every year—and not only rabbits; for, if Lord Tredegar who introduced the Bill may be believed, nearly two million birds and many thousands of dogs and cats. The backwoodsmen have had their way and succeeded in killing the Bill, a fact which reminds me that, even if there had been no other grounds for regarding the peers as a surviving anachronism who are neither useful, intelligent, nor beautiful, I should, as dictator, have abolished the House of Lords together with the steel traps of which the majority of its members approve. Indeed, I can see no reason whatever for the continuance of this House, which perpetuates privilege, condones cruelty, and regularly blocks every measure that has

THE DICTATOR RESIGNS

for its purpose the enrichment of civilization, the progress of our species and the enlightenment of mankind.

If any of my readers is tempted to think this concern with animals too trivial to occupy the attention of a dictator *manqué*, I have to thank my friend Mr. Grant Watson for two pieces of information which I hope will convince him of his error. The first consists of a series of facts. They relate to the numbers of skins sold by auction in an average year in London, whose ex-owners were done to death in almost every case by a steel trap:

American Opossum	2,430,746
Australian Opossum	1,677,507
White hare	1,084,590
Skunk	1,660,161
Beaver	51,631
Ermine	213,708
Red Fox	96,395
Musquash	490,558
Seal	22,866

The second is a description by a Dr. Coues of a mink in a trap, a description which I specially commend to all those tender and compassionate women whose well-known love of animals leads them to overfeed pet poms while adorning themselves with the skins of tortured creatures:

THE BODY OF ENGLAND

'One who has not taken a mink from a steel trap can scarcely form any idea of the terrible expression the animal's face assumes as the captor approaches. It has always struck me as the most nearly diabolical of anything in animal physiognomy. A sullen stare from the crouched motionless form gives way to a new look of surprise and fear, accompanied with the most violent contortions of the body, with renewed champings of the iron, till, breathless, with heaving flanks and open mouth dribbling saliva, the animal settles again and watches with a look of concentrated hatred, mingled with impotent rage and frightful despair.'

HUNTIN' AND SHOOTIN'

I would also have prohibited stag- and fox-hunting. I am really unable to see why people should be permitted to derive pleasure from making a stag run to the point of exhaustion and then watching it being pulled to pieces by dogs. But I would have made it up to the race of dogs by decreeing that no dog should be kept on a chain except at night. It is, to say the least of it, a little disingenuous to tie up a dog until it becomes maddened to the point of dangerousness by loneliness and boredom, and then to justify one's action on the ground that the dog is a savage and dangerous brute.

As to shooting for pleasure, I should certainly have forbidden the preservation of grouse and

THE DICTATOR RESIGNS

pheasants. If men cannot contrive to shoot birds wild, they had better not shoot them at all. These mass holocausts of semi-tame birds fattened up for the sportsman's gun, over which they are in due course driven, are one of the major curses of the countryside. Upon most of the woods of Kent and Surrey and Sussex the hand of the keeper lies heavy. A little girl may no longer pluck a bunch of primroses, while a pair of lovers seeking privacy are tracked down and persecuted, as if they were proposing to steal the wood. Meanwhile, little animals are ruthlessly slaughtered, so that the woods, bereft of wild life, are duller than at any time in their history. Who does not know those melancholy rows of little creatures—weasels and rats and stoats and noble birds—strung up in lines along the glades of our woods, for fear that, living, they might have robbed human beings of their pheasant prey? If men must take part in this business of killing for pleasure, they should at least be content with a fair field and no favour. They have no right to demand that all their victims should be 'protected' and all their competitors eliminated.

As for grouse-shooting, I should probably have forbidden it altogether. The droves of grouse, the fat stockbrokers waiting behind the butts to which after their enormous lunches they are too lazy to walk, the monstrous bags¹ of slaughtered birds—

¹ In one of these holocausts on the Abbeystead Moors near Lancaster recently as many as 2,929 grouse were shot by eight guns on a single day. Compare also the case of Mr. Thomas Kingsford Wilson, a well-

THE BODY OF ENGLAND

all these are a disgrace to the name of sport, while the cruelty involved may be serious. For a bird with its legs shot away is quite capable of flopping about for a week on the heather before it starves to death.

PINES

One other thing, and I have finished with England's body. I would not have allowed the Forestry Commission to plant pines—or not in such numbers. The pine is alien to England. Dull in itself, it spreads a dullness all around it. There are no flowers in a pine-wood, and the birds and wild life are of the scantiest. Compared with the richness of nature in a beechen copse or a little wood of oaks—the bracken and the flowers, the abundant mass of vegetation, the scurrying of little beasts, the singing of birds—the pine-wood is like a cross between a barrack yard and a tomb. Yet over increasing areas of our woodlands the conifers spread their blight. The Forestry Commission thinks always of profit and never of beauty, and pines grow quickly. Between 1920 and 1934 the Commission afforested a quarter of a million acres, and for every single beech or oak or ash they planted fifteen conifers.¹ It is the lust of profit which is ruining the beauty of

known Sheffield sportsman, recently deceased, of whom the local papers were proud to record in their obituary notices that in the course of a fifty years' career as a 'gun' he had accounted for just under 150,000 birds.

¹ Figures given by the Commission in 1934.

THE DICTATOR RESIGNS

England; it is responsible for road and ribbon building, for the breaking up of the old estates, for the indiscriminate sprawls of ignoble houses that take their places, for these new regiments of pines. Let the gentlemen of England, some of whom, to do them justice, care for beauty, reflect upon what a Socialist dictator would have done for them. The public good is more than private profit. That, all will agree, is sound Socialism. The beauty of England is a good which belongs to us all, and nobody should be permitted to make profits out of its desecration. The application of the generalization is indisputable; but how few Socialists care to make it.

CHAPTER IV

BIRTH, LOVE, AND DEATH

UNCONTROLLED ENTRIES AND EXITS

I TURN from the body of England to its inhabitants, and begin with the three most important events in their lives. These are (i) their entry into life, (ii) their leaving it, and (iii) the provision they make for its continuance in others; in other words, being born, dying, and falling in love.

Each of these three supremely important episodes has throughout man's history lain outside his control. We are pitchforked into life whether we like it or not. We do not choose that we should be born or when we should be born and we may not even choose our parents—if we could, the fact that most parents succeed in obtaining children would be totally inexplicable. Similarly with death. Our exit from life is no less ignominious than our entry into it. Nor is it better controlled. Admittedly with each generation that passes we delay death longer; but in spite of the immense sums of money, the almost incredible skill devoted to holding life in aged bodies that were better dead, death beats both doctor and patient in the end.

As with life and death, so with love. I know of no better description of the process of falling in love than that which Shaw puts into the mouth of

THE DICTATOR RESIGNS

Valentine in *You Never Can Tell*. It is, he says, 'as if Nature, after allowing us to belong to ourselves and doing what we judged right and reasonable for all these years, were suddenly lifting her great hand to take us—her two little children—by the scruffs of our little necks, and use us, in spite of ourselves, for her own purposes, in her own way'. In other words, the provision which life makes in and through us for its continuance, no less than its pitchforking of us into existence and its ignominious bundling of us out of it, takes place independently of our wills. Or has taken place hitherto; for although birth, death, and love are still to a large extent outside human control, thanks to science they are no longer so entirely. Armed by science, the human will is just beginning to encroach upon Nature's privileges and to usurp some small part of Nature's rights. Man's newly won control over his life takes two forms. First, he is beginning to control those processes of Nature which result in life's occurrence. Secondly, where Nature's operations remain uncontrolled, he can to some extent mitigate their effects.

Although human beings are already in possession of these powers, their exercise is at present potential rather than actual. Human stupidity masquerading as traditional wisdom and human prejudice pretentiously styling itself morality still effectively operate to withhold from men's use the benefit of their new-won powers. These barriers to potential benefits gratuitously erected by stupidity and

BIRTH, LOVE, AND DEATH

prejudice, it would have been one of my first objects as dictator to remove. Let us, then, take birth, love, and death in the order of their occurrence and see what changes an intelligent determination to bestow upon man the full benefits of his powers of control would effect.

BIRTH CONTROL AND ABORTION

First, birth control! Whether being alive is a good or an evil, I do not know. Since none of us has had the experience of not living and since all the books have inevitably been written by the living, we have heard only one side of the case. This being so, we have no justification for assuming life to be a boon, and no right to regard its withholding as a sin. When we withhold it by practising *coitus interruptus* we do not, even if we are Catholics, call it a sin. Nor do we, if, being rich enough to employ a private doctor, we take his advice and use the contraceptives he supplies. But, if we are poor, we find that the facilities for birth control are still largely withheld by a State which, provided that it obtains citizens in sufficient quantity, is apparently indifferent to their quality.

What is the result? Take a poverty-stricken home, dark, insanitary, comfortless, overcrowded. Take a poverty-stricken housewife, cross, tired, overworked, under-nourished, dragging irritably through life with one child perpetually at her skirts and another in her body. She does not want another child; she

THE DICTATOR RESIGNS

cannot feed it, clothe it, or care for it. If she has it, it will grow up without adequate light or air, without proper food or proper clothes, without love, without even attention. If it survives the neglect of the home and the perils of the streets, the State, which at present wants it no more than its mother, will give it a dole to take the revolutionary edge off its poverty and to ensure that its unwanted talents will rot to waste without endangering the community. To such a woman we deny the right not to have children; to such a child we deny the right not to be born.

Take another woman, with two children, or at most three. She has money at her command with which to buy abundant and varied food, suitable clothes, skilled nursing, expert medical attention. She herself, we will assume, is bored and listless from lack of proper occupation. To such a woman we concede the right not to have children, and, if it pleases her not to have them—and it usually does please her—she does not have them.

And the result? The community recruits itself from its poorest stocks; the citizens whom it can afford to equip for life fail to keep up their numbers, and the quality of the population as a whole declines. Society, in short, is like a pyramid which is continually being flattened at the top and continually proliferating at the base. Unless these dysgenic results of the differential birth-rate are arrested, they will bring our civilization to destruction owing to

BIRTH, LOVE, AND DEATH

the deterioration of the human material which composes it. The remedy is simple enough. I would give free birth-control advice to all who asked for it, and provide free contraceptive appliances at municipal clinics for all who needed them. I would increase the number of these clinics, until they became as pervasive a feature of town and village life as the churches whose usefulness they would gradually supersede; and I would require medical officers to volunteer contraceptive information, even when they were not asked for it. These things I would do because it seems to me contrary to private morality that women should have to produce children that they do not want merely because they are too poor to pay a doctor, and contrary to public welfare that the State should have thrust upon its unwilling charge numbers of young citizens for whom their parents are unable to provide and whom it is unable to employ.

The same considerations apply to abortion. The ferocity of the laws by means of which it is sought to prevent abortion is a disgrace to a civilized community. Nor do they in fact prevent it. Women will go to any lengths to avoid having more babies for whom they are unable to provide, and the main effect of the ferocious penalties at present exacted is to ensure that operations which, under controlled conditions are comparatively harmless, shall be performed by unqualified persons in circumstances of furtiveness and squalor which entail the maximum

THE DICTATOR RESIGNS

risk and suffering to the wretched women who are forced to resort to them. A civilized society has no right to take this toll of trapped and frightened women in order to gratify the prejudices of those who claim to speak for the God of gentleness and love. If it be objected that we have no right to deprive potential human beings of life, I can only repeat that we have no right to assume that life is a good, and insist that it ill becomes a society which is prepared to settle its disputes by killing, mutilating, disembowelling, blinding, burning, and asphyxiating hundreds of thousands of innocent human beings who are actually living, to be squeamish when it comes to the question of preventing life which is as yet only potential from ever becoming actual. If it be said that God objects, I must point out that, so far as is known, God has not hitherto expressed an opinion on the subject. Until He does so, it is better to follow the dictates of humanity, which, we are assured, is made in the image of God, than to supply the place of knowledge by converting our conjectures into dogmas.

If it be urged that the inevitable effect of these measures would be a reduction in the numbers of the population, I should reply, in the first place, that this is bound to occur in any event—in fact, if Dr. Enid Charles is to be believed our population, given a stationary birth-rate at the present level, will have sunk to a figure of six million in two hundred years' time—and, in the second, that I could

BIRTH, LOVE, AND DEATH

ask nothing better. These islands of ours are ridiculously overcrowded. They were designed to hold some seven or eight million persons, and they are at present making shift to accommodate forty-five. As a consequence our countryside is being eaten up, a growing percentage of our population is unemployed, and we are all living on one another's doorsteps. If the English were fewer, they would be more serene, better off and better tempered. If it be objected that large numbers of Englishmen are required to protect one another in war-time, the answer—I shall develop it on a later page¹—is that small nations have a far better chance of avoiding war than large ones. And so I insist, the population must be controlled. Hitherto Nature has pitchforked us into the world at her pleasure. Birth control and abortion constitute the brake by means of which science enables us to control the apparently blind movements of her fork. Very well, then, let us put on the brake.

MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE

I have suggested that love equally with life and death was intended by Nature to be outside our control. Two people without a taste or a thought in common, with different outlooks, ambitions, aspirations, prejudices and preferences, who, as Valentine says, have hitherto belonged to

¹ See Chapter VIII, p. 113.

THE DICTATOR RESIGNS

themselves and done what they 'judged right and reasonable', are suddenly caught up by the scruffs of their necks, swept off their feet and hurled into one another's arms. To fall in love is, as all are agreed, a most upsetting occurrence. Love inflames the passions, intoxicates the senses, clouds the judgment and distorts the perspective. It causes the loving male to endow the loved female not only with the desirability of a Venus, but with the virtues of a Madonna, the intelligence of an Athena and the practical ability of a first-rate housewife, and assures him that in comparison with the possession of the person of this epitome of all the excellences nothing in the world is of the slightest importance. Now, it is precisely when a man is under the spell of this most disturbing of all the delusions, that he is expected to make an irrevocable decision which will determine the whole course of his life. In other words, a man in a state of acute but temporary abnormality is expected to enter into a contract which will govern his conduct when he returns to normality. For, inevitably, the hot fit passes. You can get to the top of Mont Blanc but you cannot live there, and the intoxication of the heights gives way to the sober pedestrianism of the mood in which one must traverse the everyday flats. Is it any wonder that the average married couple find themselves, after the first transports are over, at best strangers, at worst enemies, and that the average home is a little hell of grudging and spiting

BIRTH, LOVE, AND DEATH

and thwarting on the part of two hopelessly ill-assorted human beings, resentful at finding that marriage has not after all opened the door into heaven and bent on taking it out of one another in revenge for their disillusionment?

Thus the expectation, deliberately encouraged by society, that marriage will be lifelong, seems to me to take a most unfair advantage of human weakness. It is hitting a man not when he is down but when he is drunk, drunk with passion. Why should promises made by one whose mind is inflamed by sexual excitement bind the very different and more prudent human being who goes daily to the office? The answer is not clear. Since the occurrence of the excitement is regarded as a ground for marriage, its cessation should be a legitimate ground for the termination of marriage. Instead, therefore, of taking advantage of the spell which life places upon us during certain unrepresentative periods of our early maturity, I would endeavour to mitigate its effects by making divorce easy, cheap, and honourable for all—as easy, as cheap and as honourable as marriage. Just as the only adequate reason for two people living together is that they want to do so, so the only adequate reason for two people ceasing to live together is that they should cease to want to do so. I should, therefore, grant divorce at the request of either party at the end of a period of six months, provided that the wish for divorce remained constant over that period. As to children, I should

THE DICTATOR RESIGNS

make each party to the marriage contribute to their upkeep a sum which was fixed in relation to his or her income, and absorb them into crèche, nursery, or school according to age.

DEATH EASY AND DEATH VOLUNTARY

Unable to decide when to be born or with whom to fall in love, man has always been able to die. To this extent, then, he may be said to have had from the outset some control over death. But so afraid is he of exercising this control, that he has actually made suicide into a crime. Suicide, indeed, is the only human activity of which it may be said that, while to fail is to be damned as a criminal, to succeed is to be dubbed insane. Why a man who is successful in taking his own life should be called mad and one who attempts it unsuccessfully wicked, is not clear. After all, we did not ask for life. We are herded into it like sheep into a pen, whether we like it or not, and we are, therefore, under no obligation to make the best of it. The truth of the matter is, I suppose, that at bottom we are most of us too uncomfortably conscious of the failure of our own lives to be able to tolerate the man who openly avows the failure of his. Thus a suicide is one who has 'sold the pass', 'blown the gaff', 'exposed the life racket'. If it were once to be freely admitted without protest that life may be not worth living, how many, including ourselves, might be tempted

BIRTH, LOVE, AND DEATH

not to live it? And so we take it out of the suicide for his treachery by calling him mad.

An additional reason for our vindictiveness is no doubt afforded by the suicide's implied criticism of society. 'Our society,' we reason to ourselves, 'is not, it appears, good enough for him. What an ungracious, nay more, what an ungrateful fellow! Let us teach him manners by giving him a taste of prison. For, it is obvious, is it not, that there must be something criminally wrong about a man who does not like our society? So wrong, in fact, that, if he succeeds in removing himself from us altogether, he must,' we add, 'be mad.' My dictatorship, impervious to the implied criticism of those who wished to cease to live under it, would tolerate suicides with equanimity. I would have gone further than mere toleration, and made a point of according every facility to those who, as a result of mature deliberation, decided that they no longer wished to live. Every town, in fact, should have its lethal chamber in which men could die easily and pleasantly. I would further increase men's control over death by according euthanasia to all those who were incurably diseased or suffering from irremediable pain. Our present practice of keeping alive men and women who can never be restored to health merely in order that they may continue to suffer, is a relic of theological barbarism. The only theoretical argument I have heard advanced against euthanasia is that, since God is the giver of life, God

THE DICTATOR RESIGNS

should also be the taker of life away—in His own good time, of course, and on His own terms. Possibly, but the same argument was used for years against giving women anaesthetics in childbirth. God, it was said, wished women to be hurt; otherwise He would not have made childbirth painful. Therefore, to cause childbirth to cease to be painful is to thwart His intentions. The implication that God takes a disinterested delight in human suffering is so hideous that most people now refuse to accept it, at least in its bearing upon the use of anaesthetics in childbirth. But while willing to alleviate the pain involved at the entry of life, people apparently desire that pain shall continue to attend its exit, with the result that it is still a criminal offence for a doctor to give easy death to the patient who craves it. While conceding that God's attitude in this matter is doubtful, I should, as dictator, have been prepared to give sufferers the benefit of the doubt. It is they, after all, who suffer, and the decision to end their sufferings should also be theirs. It is not death that is evil, but pain.

CRIMINALS AND THEIR PRISONS

Before I finish with death, I have a word to say about prisons. I would extend the benefits of euthanasia to all prisoners and captives. Unlike many of those who share my general views, I am quite prepared to coerce social nuisances. Civilized

BIRTH, LOVE, AND DEATH

life in a community is, the fact is obvious, conditioned by the observance of a minimum standard of decent behaviour on the part of all the citizens of the community. It is equally obvious that society contains a number of anti-social individuals who obey its laws unwillingly, if at all. Now, evil is parasitic upon good; that is to say, evil flourishes by preying upon good, in the sense that it only becomes worth while for some people to do wrong, because most people habitually do right. Thus the burglar is parasitic upon the householder, since, if all were burglars, there would be nothing to burgle. It is the many honest men who make dishonesty profitable, just as it is the many truthful men who make lying fruitful, since, if all men were dishonest, there would be no prizes to be gained by dishonesty, while, if all told lies, nobody would believe anybody else and lying would lose its point. Since it is the existence of law-abiding citizens that calls into being the law-breaking thug, it is clearly the business of the citizen to restrain the thug. The philosopher cannot philosophize while his neighbour is abducting his wife, nor can the artist paint while the burglar is running off with his canvases. In this sense all civilized activity is dependent upon a minimum background of ordered security, and the maintenance of this background is a condition of its continuance. Rape, arson, murder, theft, and violence are prejudicial to the higher activities of the mind and the spirit and, unless

THE DICTATOR RESIGNS

they can be restrained, civilization comes to an end.

Now, although most criminals have criminality thrust upon them by society, some are criminals born. There are, in other words, criminals made by God, and, if man is to protect himself against God's handiwork, I see no alternative to their restraint by man. But the savage sentences of imprisonment to which we habitually condemn our criminals seem to me indefensible. Of the various injustices and brutalities at which we, in our capacity of supporters of the prison system, connive, none seems to me more cruel than the elaborate precautions which we insist upon taking to prevent prisoners from committing suicide. The punishment we mete out to him sometimes makes a man so miserable that he wants to die; yet we refuse him death. This is sheer vindictiveness. If society decides that a man's presence in it is a nuisance, why these elaborate precautions to prevent him from removing his presence? Society is a dog-in-the-manger when it says to a man, as in effect it does say, 'We don't want your life; in fact, we want it so little that we are going to shut you up, so that you can no longer embarrass us by living it in public. Nevertheless, we shall not permit you to take it. On the contrary, we propose to spend time and money and trouble, and to waste the lives and brutalize the characters of numbers of useful citizens, in order to ensure that you do not take it, but rot in prison, a misery to

BIRTH, LOVE, AND DEATH

yourself and a burden to those whom we must pay to look after you. In a word, you shall not live your life, nor shall you take it; but it shall go bad on your hands.'

It is by such general considerations that my treatment of malefactors would have been determined. I should (1) have arranged for every malefactor to be sent to a mental home to see what could be done in the way of a cure; (2) if he remained incurably obstreperous, I would send him to prison, but I would say to him, 'You are not going to like it here. On the contrary, it will seem to you boring, dull and uncomfortable. Compared with the life you have been living, you will find it intolerably lacking in colour, and you are going to be here for a very long time. In case, then, you prefer ceasing to exist to dragging out an existence of unrelieved boredom, we have so arranged matters that you have only to signify your wishes, and means of terminating your existence will be placed at your disposal. Your death will be easy and pleasant. You will begin by getting drunk on the best liquor we can provide, but as in expansiveness of spirit and lightness of heart, you continue to drink, you will presently begin to imbibe with your drink something that will send you to sleep, permanently to sleep. Remember, then, that you have only to say the word. One other thing! Let us suppose that, while finding your life here intolerable, you are, nevertheless, unwilling to accept easy death as a way out.

THE DICTATOR RESIGNS

I have another proposal to put before you. Our doctors are continually handicapped in their fight against disease by their lack of adequate information as to effects upon their patients of various modes of treatment which are still in the experimental stage. Their trouble is, you see, that they cannot normally take the risk of the effects of an insufficiently explored treatment being disastrous, and dare not, therefore, try it. In a word, they cannot afford to experiment. Now, we would suggest that you offer yourself as raw material for experiment. If the results of trying a particular treatment on you are disastrous, we still offer you an escape in easy death; if they are successful, we will set you free. We offer you, then, a sporting chance of winning your freedom, together with the comforting conviction that, even if the experiment goes awry, you will have conferred a benefit upon mankind. It is a sporting offer and we hope that you will accept it. But there is no compulsion.'

CHAPTER V

DOMESTIC POLICY

THE ENGLISH HOUSEWIFE

ENGLISH domestic arrangements seem to me to be bad, and I should hope to improve them. They rest upon the assumption that the average woman has a flair for domesticity and is capable both of bringing up children and of running a house. I can see no grounds for this assumption. An increasing number of women have no talent whatever for housework, and regard the home as a cross between a prison and a workhouse. Inevitably, they wish to escape. The desire for escape is common to both working-class and middle-class housewives, although it springs from different causes. Working-class women are almost inevitably overworked, and what with cleaning, cooking, washing up, sewing, making clothes for children, keeping them quiet at home or packing them off to school, managing the household expenditure on an inadequate income, and sustaining the often unwelcome attentions of their husbands, spend their lives in a routine of harassed drudgery, botching every job and mastering none. The sufferings of middle-class women from under-employment are scarcely less than those of working-class women from over-employment. The growth of transport facilities and the increase in

THE DICTATOR RESIGNS

mechanical and electrical appliances have stripped domestic duties of all that lent them dignity and gave them interest, and substituted the perfunctory performance of an automatic routine. The middle-class woman neither brews nor bakes; she does not wash; she has no skill in the making of preserves, and no interest in the preparation of food. She does not, in fact, prepare food at all; she takes out of tins food that is already prepared. She does not cook, so much as warm up food that others have cooked for her. She has no skill in shopping, but orders from the stores by telephone or from the tradesman's van that calls at the door. She gets her heat from the gas company, her water from the municipality. Thus the skilled and varied duties that once elevated domestic work into a craft have dwindled into a round of warming up, washing up, cleaning, sweeping, and bed-making which the woman of average intelligence and energy can perform in a couple of hours, finding herself on their completion with interests unawakened and faculties running to waste to get through, as best she may, the vast tracts of unoccupied leisure which constitute the wilderness of her life.

One of the many women's tragedies in the modern world is the tragedy of the middle-class woman with domestic tastes. It is the tragedy of a vanished vocation. There are multitudes of women in contemporary England who ask for nothing better than to run a home, provided that they are allowed

DOMESTIC POLICY

to run it with their own hands, exercising in the process all the functions of a varied domestic craft—brewing and baking and preserving, washing and cleaning and sweeping—and taking pride in getting their jobs done more rapidly and efficiently than Mrs. Blank over the way. Above all, they are cooks and find in the preparation of food no small part of the satisfaction which the artist derives from the practice of his art. In the modern world such women find themselves unwanted and unused. There is no demand for their talents, no appreciation of their skill. The routine duties of house-keeping and house-cleaning no doubt remain; but there is little pride in a clean house, when a vacuum cleaner has done the work. Thus all that is creative in the art and craft of domestic work has been ruthlessly eliminated. Instead of making things well for herself, the woman of domestic tastes and talents must do the best she can with what it pays somebody else to make for her, food in tins and boxes and gas laid on by the company. And with these materials the best that she can do is scarcely better than the best of a fool or a sloven. Thus while for the working-class woman the home remains a workhouse, for the middle-class woman it has become a shell. Unable any longer to feel that she counts in a world which has mechanized her function out of existence, or matters in a social system which has no value for her services, she must make shift to fill the vast tracts of her

THE DICTATOR RESIGNS

unoccupied leisure as best she can, flirting unconvincingly at dances and cocktail-parties, playing bad golf and worse tennis, typing inadequately in offices, giving a lukewarm and fitful allegiance to causes, and endeavouring by a thousand and one unsuccessful devices to attract attention, to achieve a reputation and to acquire self-respect.

A CORPS OF DOMESTIC WORKERS

I would deal with this situation in two ways. First, I would require each Local Authority to train and maintain a staff of skilled domestic workers. These should be continuously available for engagement by householders requiring housework that they are unwilling or unable to do for themselves. But they would not be paid by these householders, nor would they be any more responsible to them than the dustman who clears my dustbin is responsible to me. If my dustman does his job inefficiently, I complain to the Local Authority, and, if my complaint is substantiated, the dustman gets the sack. But it is not I who sack him. Similarly with nurses. The nurse whom illness or emergency brings to my house is not employed by me, but by the hospital, the nursing-home or the Municipality who send her. This system I would extend to cover the performance of housework. Its advantages are two-fold. First, housework would be efficiently done by skilled workers, instead of being inefficiently

DOMESTIC POLICY

scamped by unskilled workers. Secondly, the endless psychological difficulties between mistress and maid, members of two different social orders living under the same roof, would be obviated. The skilled domestic worker would retain her self-respect; the householder would know that his or her house was being efficiently run.

But if efficiency is to be achieved, the house must no longer be treated as an entirely separate self-contained unit. Consider the wastefulness of our present arrangements! Here are twenty houses in a row or twenty flats in a block. Two or three times a day twenty meals are cooked in twenty separate kitchens, cooked expensively and inefficiently on little stoves with inadequate utensils, and twenty sets of dishes are subsequently washed up at twenty different sinks. To pool or communalize the work would involve an immense saving of time and labour, and would mean a considerable gain in cheapness and efficiency. I would, therefore, as dictator have established communal kitchens and sculleries where the cooking and washing up for all the twenty houses or flats would have been done simultaneously. People would still feed separately. Their privacy, in other words, would remain unimpaired. But their food would be sent from the communal kitchen, and its debris removed to the communal scullery.

How would such a scheme bear upon the problem of the contemporary middle-class woman? Her

THE DICTATOR RESIGNS

difficulties, I have suggested, are twofold. In so far as she possesses no domestic aptitude, she is at present constrained to perform duties for which she is unfitted. In so far as she possesses it, the modern flat or villa provides insufficient occasion for its exercise. The scheme just outlined would mitigate, if it would not remedy, both disabilities at a stroke. Those with domestic aptitude would, as employees of the Local Authority, find their range of usefulness extended far beyond the restricted scope of their own homes. Their field of operations would now comprise all the houses in a row or all the flats in a block. By virtue of this extension of the sphere of the operations of the domestically competent, the domestically incompetent would be released from the burdensome duties in their own homes, which they now inefficiently perform. Thus domestic work, instead of being anybody's job, performed without qualifications and without pay, and never finished, would become a skilled occupation, open only to those who were qualified by aptitude and training, with regulated hours and standard rates of pay.

CHAPTER VI

FUN POLICY

THE PLEASURES OF RESTRICTION

No consideration operated more decisively in determining the abandonment of my projected dictatorship than my conviction that human beings should be respected as intelligent adults, instead of being repressed as if they were refractory children, liable at any moment to moral shipwreck and material ruin, unless I or somebody else kept a careful watch over their lives. It has always seemed intolerable to a certain sort of mind that people should take their pleasures in the ways that pleased them. It has sometimes seemed intolerable that they should take any pleasures at all. The sort of mind in question is one which derives its own pleasure from the exercise of power, and is, therefore, apt to lead its possessor into the ways of dictatorship. Dictatorships are by nature puritanical, in the sense that they disapprove of all enjoyments which the dictator does not share and resolutely refuse to call a pleasure a pleasure, if they can contrive to call it a sin. The manufacture of sins is a comparatively easy task, and leads inevitably to the setting up of restrictions upon the enjoyments of the sinful. It also engenders the pleasure, the very great pleasure, of punishing the sinful. A dictator may be defined as one to whom it

THE DICTATOR RESIGNS

seems good that other people should not be allowed to live their lives as they think good. But although the desire to meddle receives *carte blanche* under a dictatorship, it can flourish in almost any political soil.

Thus in contemporary England we are still suffering from a number of vestigial restrictions surviving from the Victorian age which, conceivably appropriate to sinful children, are an insult to intelligent adults. That I should be able to read what I please, write what I please, see the plays and films which appeal to me, enjoy myself according to my nature on the one day of the week on which I am free from the necessity of earning my living—these are elementary rights which I should be entitled to take for granted as a citizen of a civilized country.

THE CENSORSHIP

To concede them is to concede, in the first place, the need for the drastic reform, if not the abolition, of the censorship of books and plays. If censorships were intelligently exercised, they might at least be tolerable. But they are not. Consider, for example, the operations of the censorship in contemporary England. While important works of literature such as *Ulysses* and *Lady Chatterley's Lover* are confiscated by the British Customs Officers, we permit the unrestricted entry into the country of books whose

FUN POLICY

frivolity is likely to turn the head of any typist in revolt against the drabness of her life. It is in the same vein that the censor, while permitting films and farces and revues which flaunt all the allurements of the life of immorality—the diamonds, the champagne, the gorgeous dresses—before the dazzled eyes of the housemaid who is discontented with her fifteen shillings a week, sedulously bans from the stage any serious attempt to portray the all too frequent consequences of that life—the squalor, the loss of self-respect, the blasting disease. There is an admirable film, *Kameradschaft*, which shows German miners coming to the help of French miners after an accident in a mine just across the frontier. The film is a truly noble piece of propaganda. It exposes the artificiality of national barriers and the appeal which their common humanity makes to all men in the face of disaster. The film begins by introducing us to the members of the mining community, and we are shown a number of varied scenes depicting the life of the miner in all its aspects, including a short sequence showing the men having shower-baths after leaving the pits. Upon the removal of this sequence the censor insisted, for fear, presumably, that the unclothed flesh of the miners should excite the pass audience. Yet almost every cinema simultaneously exhibiting outside allurements to prospective audier sparsely clad bodies of attractiv

THE DICTATOR RESIGNS

various stages of sexual excitement. Now I would permit both the young persons and the shower-baths. Indeed, I should, at least for an experimental period, abolish the censorship altogether and see what happened. If the result was a quite appalling outbreak of debauchery and obscenity, I should reintroduce the censorship in a form which, while permitting plays and books that depicted the natural consequences of human actions, forbade those which suspended them. As an illustration of this policy, I would cause the censor rigorously to exclude any suggestion that sexual intercourse may take place without either contraception or babies. And now at last you will see, if you have not already seen, how unfit I am for the apocryphal dictatorship which ambition and the fashion of the times conspired to thrust upon me. Dictators are traditionally unable to dispense with censorships and traditionally foment the production of babies, yet here am I, proposing to abolish the censorship, except in so far as it may be necessary to prevent people from being deluded into the unwitting production of babies.

THE SABBATH AND THE CHURCH

I turn from plays, books, and films to the Sabbath. The restrictions upon the enjoyment of Sunday are doubly mean because they are founded upon economic disability. When, for example, the

FUN POLICY

Mitcham Common Conservators decided, as they recently did, to ban the playing of football on the Common while permitting that of golf, they were, it is obvious, acting on the assumption that the Lord finds displeasing in the poor amusements which he regards with toleration in the rich. Personally I find it hard to believe that God's will, while permitting the pleasures of making contact between long, thin pieces of matter in the shape of clubs, cues, bats, sticks, rackets or mallets and small round ones, to those who are rich enough to belong to a club, should wish to deny them to those who, having to depend upon municipal facilities for their games, find courts and links closed to them upon the only day of the week on which leisure permits their unrestricted enjoyment. For example, rich men attend clubs, poor men pubs. Sunday billiards, which is permitted in clubs, is prohibited by law in pubs. Now I wonder why God should wish that?

I propose to assume that God is not a killjoy, and on the strength of this assumption would have removed the dead hand of the Church from Sunday, permitting people to behave on the one day of the week on which they have leisure exactly as they would behave upon other days. I should not have permitted non-worshippers to interfere with God's worship, but equally I should not have permitted God's worshippers to interfere with non-worshippers. After all, I should not have dreamed of

THE DICTATOR RESIGNS

preventing any of my subjects from going to church. Why should they wish to prevent my other subjects from playing games or from bathing or from sun-bathing? Why, in fact, should the Church exert any authority at all upon those who do not accept its tenets or share its assumptions? There is no virtue in belief as such, and the days have passed when the acceptance of a particular set of dogmas about the constitution and government of the universe¹ conferred special virtues upon citizens. That beliefs about the next world stand in no necessary relation to civic virtue in this one, is by now fairly widely admitted. Nevertheless, contemporary life is still incommoded by a number of survivals of which we can only make sense on the assumption that the Christian Church possesses authority over the lives of non-Christians. It is, for example, still difficult for declared agnostics to hold positions of power and responsibility in the State, or to obtain publicity for their views through the State-controlled B.B.C. The Church, in other words, is still a State Church. I would dissolve the partnership. I have no objection to people believing what they please or maintaining an organization to minister to their religious needs, provided that they do in fact maintain it and not expect me, as a non-Christian, to contribute to its maintenance merely because I am a member of the

¹ Although, apparently, not about the constitution and government of the State.

FUN POLICY

State. If people want churches and priests, they should pay for them. I would, then, secularize the State, abolish the privileged position of the Anglican Church, and treat all religions with an impartial indifference.

BODIES AND DRINKS

The mention of sun-bathing reminds me that I should have removed all existing restrictions upon people's dress, or rather upon their undress. It has always been with the greatest difficulty that men and women, especially women, have been restrained from baring large portions of their persons to the public gaze. In Victorian days one bared the bosom, or as much of it as one could. To-day the back and the legs are favoured. And why not, pray? The human race likes to see and be seen, and I am unable to discover any good reason why the pleasure people take in the sight of one another's bodies should be inhibited. Only last summer a magistrate fined a man for taking off his shirt on a hot day in Hyde Park. Now what, I should like to know, is there that is wicked about the male chest and thorax, and why, whatever it is, is it wicked in a park and not upon a beach? A democratic Parliament has unaccountably decided that wine is not a poison at 2.25, although it becomes one at 2.35. It has also decided that wine which is a poison at 2.25 in one place may not be a poison at

THE DICTATOR RESIGNS

2.25 in another place a mile away. I can see no ground for these obscure temporal and spatial restrictions. I went once to a wine-shop to buy half a bottle of brandy to administer to a friend who was suffering from violent sickness. I was told I could not buy half a bottle, but that I could buy a bottle. I could, however, buy half a bottle, provided that I bought bottles of wine or beer as well. It seems a pity to soil these things with comment, yet I cannot refrain from asking what can be the point of denying a man, coming hot and tired from a walk over the mountains, a drink of beer merely because he has been unable to reach a pub until 2.35.

The restrictions upon drink do not even serve the purpose for which they may be supposed to have been introduced. On the contrary, they cause a man to drink deliberately and solidly during the permitted hours, instead of occasionally and when he feels like it at all hours. Indeed, 'rush drinking' has reached such lengths that publicans are said to oppose the withdrawal of the restrictions for fear that their takings would be diminished.

WHAT MOST PEOPLE MEAN BY LIBERTY

As dictator, I had, it will be remembered, intended to commandeer the Press and the publishing houses and to run them as instruments of my propaganda. I should not, indeed, have forbidden people to publish views critical of my dictatorship, but they

FUN POLICY

would have found such publication extremely difficult owing to the monopoly I had established. An outrage on liberty? Certainly, but on whose liberty? How many people really want to air their opinions in public and to criticize the Government? An infinitesimal fraction whose incurable loquacity leads us enormously to exaggerate their numbers. People like myself make such a noise that the public believes that there are many like myself. This belief is a delusion. It was not in the last resort because of the outrage I was putting upon the public, but because of the outrage I was putting upon my own conscience, that I abandoned my dictatorship. And so let me say now, in excuse for the dictatorship that might have been, the pill would have been well sugared. Though denied political freedom, the majority would have had the freedom they cared for, and, now that I no longer speak as dictator, I still insist that they should have them. What are they? The freedom to drink, to bet, to make love when and how they please without pettifogging restrictions imposed by well-meaning people who want to deprive men and women of that most important of all the liberties, the liberty to go to the devil in one's own way. To-day anybody may edit a paper, found a sect, or lead a party; but people may not gamble, drink, or make love at their pleasure. As dictator, I should have conceded the second class of liberties, while withholding the first. Relieved of the burden of my dictatorship, I am at

THE DICTATOR RESIGNS

liberty to insist upon the importance of both. For, I repeat, the liberty to speak, to read, to write what one chooses, though it is the very life-blood of men such as myself, is of little value to ordinary people. So far as speech is concerned, ordinary people give and will continue to give to the world the answers it expects. So far as concerns reading, they are and will continue to be content with the newspapers they so affectionately disparage and the murders and the mothers who bulk so largely in the best-selling novels that pass for literature, while, as for writing, an occasional business communication and a shower of picture-postcards variegated with letters enclosing 'snaps' indicating absences on holiday constitute the limits of their ambitions and capacities in this direction. To the common man, then, I should as dictator have endeavoured to endear myself by a comprehensive 'fun policy', including the abolition of restrictions upon drinking, betting and gambling, upon the selling of literature quaintly called obscene, upon the production of plays and films, upon dress and undress, and upon the exhibition and sale of birth-control literature and appliances. My name would, I trust, have been handed down to posterity as that of the great striker off of shackles, the great giver of common pleasures, the great champion of common liberties. My resignation precludes, I fear, any chance of so agreeable a reputation. But I continue to advocate the measures upon which it would have rested.

FUN POLICY

This concludes my fun policy proper. There are a number of other measures which, as dictator, I would have taken with a view to increasing the happiness of my subjects, and which, in my capacity of humble publicist, I still insist upon advocating. These are important enough to demand a chapter to themselves.

CHAPTER VII

PRAISE, PAIN, FOOD, AND OTHER MATTERS

PRAISE-GIVERS

I BELIEVE that many human beings are troubled more or less continuously with a craving for approval. While the approval of those who are thought to possess money or patronage is specially desired, approval *tout court*, from whatever source it comes, gives pleasure. Women in particular desire to be praised, and even when they suspect that the praise may be interested or insincere, they enjoy it none the less. In the case of those, unfortunately the majority, who nourish a conviction, rarely permitted to penetrate to the surface of consciousness, that their lives are failures, this desire for praise may become an obsession which, unless some means is found of satisfying it, proves fatal to happiness.

We all know people who take a pride in the possession of the most irrelevant accomplishment, in being present at occasions in whose importance they have played no part, or participating in achievements to whose greatness they have not contributed. There is the man, recurrent in all strata of society, who plumes himself on the fact that the Midday Scot touched seventy-three miles an hour and arrived three minutes before time; there is the man

who prides himself on his expert but totally useless knowledge of the railway system of Great Britain, the man who pats himself metaphorically on the back because he can describe to you the signs of every public-house in every village in the Cotswolds, the man whose boast it is that he possesses a copy of every book in whose title the word 'purple' occurs published in this country in the last fifty years. Why this delight in useless knowledge, this vicarious pride in achievements not our own? Because it helps a man to assert himself, to impose himself upon the world's attention, to obtain notice, to startle, to create a sensation, to secure admiration, to extract, above all, that spoken admiration which is praise. Now, from such people the world only too often withholds the incense they crave. Not unnaturally! It would be so easy, one often thinks, to approve, if one's approval were not so blatantly demanded, to praise, if all the wind were not taken out of one's sails by the subject's forestalling praise of himself. Praise, like lust, should be spontaneous; it cannot be produced to order: the more urgently its production is demanded, the more difficult it is to produce. This, at least, is true of the praising of ordinary persons.

But suppose that they are not ordinary persons. Suppose that they are paid professionals, specially trained in the art of praising, whose livelihood depends on the exercise of their skill. I would, then, advocate the establishment of a corps of

THE DICTATOR RESIGNS

professional praisers, and install them in 'Academies of Praise' or 'Appraisements Clinics' maintained by the State. The community recognizes the need for patching up sick bodies, and hospitals are approved by all. But why stop at bodies? Why not go further and recognize the need for salvaging sick souls. At my Academies of Praise wounded vanities would be soothed, inferiority complexes dispelled, self-respect restored. On leaving, the patient would again feel that he counted in the world, that his fellows considered him to be important, that men valued his opinion, women his person, that, adequately equipped for life at all points, he was in certain specialized respects a quite exceptional man. And all these results would be secured by a simple process of judicious praising.

The patient would, of course, know that he was being praised, praised deliberately, professionally and officially. He would know, too, that he was paying to have this done to him. Yet, as I have already pointed out, praise that is known to be insincere is none the less pleasant, and those who had been specially trained in the art would achieve a virtuosity in praising which would more than counterbalance the known mercenariness of their motives. Rich hags make love to gloomy but handsome young men, whom they have hired to perform for them offices which should be accorded spontaneously; but the fact does not detract from the hags' enjoyment of their dances and their love.

PRAISE, PAIN, FOOD, AND OTHER MATTERS

Nor, I feel convinced, would the dispirited patient who, from the moment of his arrival, was lapped in the waters of approval, was deliberately soaked in praise, praise expected and unexpected, praise gross and praise subtle, praise open and praise concealed, praise varied and praise repetitive, praise for that on the score of which he is known to value himself, praise for that in respect of which he had been previously made to feel himself a fool, fail to derive inestimable psychological benefit from his treatment, merely because he was conscious of having paid for it.

THE NATIONALIZATION OF DOCTORS

The treatment of dispirited minds leads naturally to that of aching bodies. The present system, under which persons who are ill call in doctors to cure them, and then proceed to pay the doctors on the basis of the elaborateness rather than the success of their cure, is an outrage upon common sense and a challenge to common dishonesty. It makes illness an asset in the patient and puts a premium upon knavery in the doctor. For (1) if all persons were continuously well, then, under the present system, doctors would starve. (2) If all persons were allowed to become so dangerously ill that any of them might at any moment die, and many of them did in fact die, the incomes of doctors would suffer from the diminution in the numbers of

THE DICTATOR RESIGNS

patients. It is, therefore, to the interest of doctors to ensure that nobody should be quite well, and that nobody should be ill enough to be in danger of dying. It is, in other words, to the interest of doctors that everybody should be slightly unwell, or that they should think that they are, even if they are not. A system which makes ill-health and valetudinarianism conduce to the advantage of those whose professional business it is to cure the former and to dispel the latter, is obviously foolish. Suppose, for example, that I have a pain in my tummy and that I don't know its cause. To simplify matters, we will suppose that there are two possible alternative causes of the pain, which we will call respectively X and Y. If the cause is in fact X, the pain can be adequately dealt with by a few doses of liver salts. If it is in fact Y, it will yield only to an operation which will entail five weeks in a nursing-home and the payment of handsome fees to doctors, surgeons, and anaesthetists. In other words, if the cause is X the doctor receives ten shillings for consultation and advice, if Y, a number of doctors and of the hangers-on of doctors receive between forty and fifty pounds. I am not suggesting that doctors are so dishonest as to say that the cause is Y when they know it to be X; although such cases have occurred. What I am suggesting is that in cases of doubt, which are frequent, when it is far from clear whether the cause is X or Y, we provide doctors with the strongest possible incentive to

PRAISE, PAIN, FOOD, AND OTHER MATTERS

opt for Y. That is to say, we provide somebody with the strongest possible incentive to cut us open. This is to introduce the system of payment by results, when the results most highly paid are the exact reverse of those which we wish. In China at one period—it may still be the case, for all I know to the contrary—policemen were paid by results. If there were no results, there was no pay. Now, for results criminals are essential. The policeman's livelihood depended, therefore, upon the existence of criminals. But in order that there may be criminals, there must first be crimes. Having first provided the crimes, the policemen then proceeded to provide the criminals by arresting innocent men and torturing them until they confessed to the crimes which the policemen had committed. Sometimes the commission of a crime was not thought to be necessary, and men were arrested and tortured until they confessed to imaginary crimes. The police were then paid for apprehending the criminal.

That this is a silly system is obvious to the Western mind; it is silly because it gives men a vested interest in crime. Under the Chinese system, when there is no crime, policemen starve. Moreover, the more numerous the crimes, the more wicked the criminals, the richer the policemen. Read 'diseases' for 'crimes', and the system is in essentials that which obtains in this country. Our medical system gives men a vested interest in disease.

THE DICTATOR RESIGNS

When there is no disease, doctors starve. Moreover, the more numerous the diseases, the more elaborate the treatment, the richer the doctors.

The remedy is obvious. I should compulsorily enrol all doctors as State servants with conditions of service and pension modelled on those obtaining in the Civil Service. Every general practitioner would be responsible for the health of all the people living in his particular area. It would be his duty to examine each of these people once a year, whatever the state of his or her health, with a view to satisfying himself, if they were healthy, that they would be likely to remain so, and if they showed symptoms of disease, to nipping the disease in the bud, before it had time to develop. Promotion would depend partly on seniority, partly on merit. Merit would be assessed in terms of absence of disease in the locality for which the doctor was responsible. It should, in fact, be the merit of the doctor to make himself superfluous, and for this superfluity I would be prepared to pay, instead of as at present penalizing the doctor who achieves it by removing his livelihood. If the incidence of disease in a particular area seemed abnormally high, I should suspend the normal rate of annual increment in the doctor's salary. In extreme cases I would reduce his salary. This system would have the great merit of giving the doctors the same financial incentive to keep us healthy, which they now have to keep us diseased. In the

PRAISE, PAIN, FOOD, AND OTHER MATTERS

train of this reform, I should have introduced a number of others. In fact, I should hope that this major reform would automatically induce others; for example, in the hospital system.

HOSPITALS

I do not blame the hospitals for being what they are. Indeed, I recognize that they are as they are, because of their miserable poverty. It is poverty that is responsible for the bad food, the over-driven nurses, the cast-iron rules, the routine, the red tape. The compulsory uniformity is a necessary consequence of understaffing. You are forced to treat people as units when you have neither the time nor the energy to treat them as individuals. The obvious step is to nationalize the hospitals, staff them adequately, and pay the staff at rates sufficient to make them respect themselves and their work. With the nationalization of doctors most of the worst features of the present system would disappear, for example, the portentously early waking.

A patient, let us suppose, has been operated upon. He is feverish, wretched and in pain. For hours he tosses miserably on his bed. At last, assisted by a draught, he gets off to sleep—let us say, at 1 a.m. At 5 he is forcibly awakened. Why? Because he must be washed, brushed and fed, and everybody else in the ward must be washed, brushed and fed, and the ward itself must be scrubbed and

THE DICTATOR RESIGNS

swept, in readiness for the visit of God in the shape of the doctor at 9.30. Why cannot God come later? Because he must be back in his consulting-room by 11, in order to invent cures for the ailments which his rich patients haven't got. Why must he do this? Because he is dependent on his rich patients for his income. They must come, then, when it suits them, and, being rich, it is obvious that they cannot be suited before 11 o'clock. Hence because of the doctor's financial dependence on his rich patients, poor people suffer unnecessary pain and illness, unnecessary pain because they are woken to suffering which might otherwise have been avoided in the unconsciousness of sleep, unnecessary illness since sleep, it is admitted, is the great healer, and to deprive a man of sleep is to deprive him of the best agency of recovery.

PAIN-REMOVERS

One other matter before I finish with the medical profession. Some doctors are interested in bodies, some in minds, some in nerves, some in limbs, some in eyes, some in ears, in throats, in noses, in appendices, in prostates. . . . But all, in one way or another, are interested in disease—inevitably, since disease is the subject-matter of their profession. But in pain they are not interested, or were not, until the last few years, when a very few have begun to wake up to the prodigious part played by pain

PRAISE, PAIN, FOOD, AND OTHER MATTERS

in delaying return to health. But however small the interest of pain to the doctor, its interest to the patient is very great. I consider that physical pain is incomparably the greatest evil in the world, and that all the attempts which are made to show that it is unreal, or that it chastens, refines and disciplines the sufferer, or that it strengthens his character, or that it increases his spirituality, or that it is less formidable than spiritual pains, such as, for example, those involved by loss of friends, bank balance, or chastity, or that it is, indeed, anything at all but totally pointless and totally beastly, are among the most outrageous of the hypocrisies by which human sentimentality has sought to impose upon human credulity. Pain is worse, far worse, than disease; for disease would lose its sting, if it were painless. I would prescribe, then, that in addition to its physicians and its surgeons, every hospital should have its staff of pain-removers. It should be their mission not to cure the patient, but to see that he suffered no avoidable pain in the course of being cured. They should be present at every operation and at every recovery from operation, and their duties should begin where the surgeon's cease. Under present arrangements, while the importance of pain-removing is increasingly recognized, the recognition is acted upon only for the benefit of the rich. I can see no good reason why one should suffer avoidable pain, merely because one happens to be poor.

THE DICTATOR RESIGNS

The community may be at liberty to starve its citizens, but it is not, therefore, entitled to hurt them.

FOOD AND HOTELS

No measures for increasing happiness and diminishing pain would be complete which did not include an overhauling of our feeding arrangements. I have already in a previous chapter outlined provisions for securing a supply of skilled domestic helpers at need. The essence of the system was that domestics should be employees of the Local Authority, who would be responsible for the payment, the conduct and the efficiency of the persons they supplied. I would extend a similar system to hotels. Every Local Authority would be made responsible for seeing that the hotels and inns in its area reached a certain standard. Hotels would be divided into classes according to the prices charged, and would then be graded within their class according to their efficiency. Hotels charging fifteen shillings a day and over would, for example, be placed in Class I. But, unless the standard of food and accommodation provided was in fact absolutely first rate, they would be graded B in Class I. Improvement would lead to up-grading. That improvement is required I take for granted. The complaints of the bad service, the intolerable monotony of the

PRAISE, PAIN, FOOD, AND OTHER MATTERS

tasteless food, the practically undrinkable wines in English hotels are all too familiar, and, cordially as I endorse them, I shall not enlarge on them here. It is, however, worth while mentioning some of the requirements upon which I should insist as qualifications for the inclusion of an hotel in Grade A in the first class: (i) The cooking of local dishes, (ii) the provision of locally grown food, (iii) the refusal to regard the taking of soup, vegetables, and fruit out of tins as the preparation of soup, vegetables, and fruit, (iv) the refusal to regard the heating up of food which has been bought already cooked as the cooking of food. I should insist, further, on the humblest inn being able and willing to produce some food at request on pain of withdrawal of its licence, and upon every inn providing an adequate table for the purpose of eating and drinking by its guests. It is possible—I have not quite made up my mind on the subject—that I would have abolished stand-up counters for perpendicular drinking altogether. It would have been only the grave menace to my dictatorship occasioned by such a reform that would have deterred me.

One other matter, and I have done with hotels. My complaint of the intolerable monotony of the tasteless food served in English hotels is not meant as an encouragement to a hopeless attempt to emulate the culinary achievements of the French. That were altogether too much to ask; nor, indeed,

THE DICTATOR RESIGNS

is our climate altogether fitted to the highly spiced foods, the sauces, the garlic, and the paprika which are essential elements in French cooking. I would insist rather on a training in English cookery, so that a cook would know how to ensure that his steaks and chops, his mutton and beef were so prepared as to bring out to the full the natural flavours of our excellent meat. I would have encouraged the carrying out of this policy by forbidding the use of French names to describe non-French dishes. The laziness which empties a tin of mixed peaches and apricots into a dish and the snobbery which insists on calling the result *salade aux fruits* are alike indefensible. Why, after all, should honest roast duck be called *caneton roti*? Very few English people can divine the contents of dishes from their French names, even when the French names are correctly used. Guests are, therefore, given the alternative of being bounced into asking for something that they do not want under the impression that it is something else, or of being humiliated into betraying their ignorance of French by asking a no less ignorant waiter what the menu means. In fact, snobbery almost invariably dictates the first course. I should, then, have required all food served in this country to be called by the language of the country, except in those rare cases in which the cook was competent to prepare a bona-fide French dish.

Although I would not have French names, I

PRAISE, PAIN, FOOD, AND OTHER MATTERS

would have French habits. I am writing this in the third successive summer of long, sunny days and short, hot nights. Gardens are a blaze of colour, the eye craves for green, the body for air; in short, it is lovely to be out of doors. But suppose that I am obliged to feed in town. My food is served in a hot, stuffy dining-room, in fact, in precisely the same room as that in which it would have been served in the middle of winter. If I want to stand a friend a drink, I am forced to take him to an overcrowded, overheated pub where both of us must stand. Why are we denied cafés, cafés with tables in the open air where people can eat and drink at their ease and their leisure? It is not clear—not, at any rate, to me, and I would have had the London streets lined with cafés, wherever the pavement was broad enough to permit them. In pursuance of the same policy I would have made country hotels provide verandas and done what I could to encourage the English to eat and drink out of doors. We should not allow our habits so unjustly to malign our climate.

CHATTERERS AND LAVATORIES

I should have proposed to round off my 'fun policy' with one or two provisions designed to increase the amenities, while at the same time enhancing the dignities of our daily life. I would have provided that all trains should include

THE DICTATOR RESIGNS

'non-talking' carriages. The number of people who object to smoking is by now very small. The number who object to talking is considerable. Inevitably! What can be more exasperating, when you have a long journey before you and are looking forward to getting through some work—there are, let us say, proofs to be corrected, a book to read and to review, a speech to con, or a nineteenth-century novel lying open by your side inviting you to the first piece of undisturbed reading for pure pleasure in which you have been able to indulge for weeks—what, I say, can be more exasperating than to find a couple of confounded women chattering in your compartment? How well one knows those women, who, shamefully abusing the gift of articulate speech, drivel on hour after hour for all the world as if somebody had left a couple of taps running, emitting noises which, completely devoid of intellectual content themselves, effectively debar any intelligent activity on the part of those who hear them. Well, let the taps run; but do not force me and my kind to listen to them. The thing is simple enough. All that is required is reserved carriages for non-talkers.

Lest these remarks should seem to discriminate unfairly against women, I would have hastened to clear myself from the charge of anti-feminist prejudice by the reform of an abuse which constitutes one of the most flagrant pieces of small economic injustice which society tolerates. I have

PRAISE, PAIN, FOOD, AND OTHER MATTERS

never been able to understand why public lavatories should be free to males and not to females. The necessity for producing a penny on every occasion is at best an inconvenience, and to the poor who count their pennies it is a serious injustice, while if one has no penny at all, I hesitate to think what happens. There are, of course, difficulties arising from the fact that women appear to need more extensive accommodation. Nevertheless, dictators can afford to be generous, and I would have gladly spent the few thousands which would have been necessary to relieve women from the imposition of this harassing tax. It is obvious on reflection that if equality of the sexes in this matter is to be established, the pennies which for certain purposes are exacted also from males would have to be remitted. And why not, pray?

CHAPTER VIII

THE LARGER ISSUES

LONG-TERM POLICY

BUT all this, it will be said, is trivial stuff. The grading of hotels, the use of English names for food, the provision of non-talking railway compartments and of free public lavatories for women are, it may be conceded, occasionally important for leisured people with money to spend on amusing themselves; but their importance is negligible compared with that of the issues on which the fate of men and nations depends. Our civilization is trembling on the brink of self-extermination in war through its inability to control the means of destruction which science has invented for its bedevilment. Modern Capitalism is drifting to economic collapse through its inability to distribute the goods showered upon it by the means of production which science has devised for its embarrassment. Have you, then, it may be said, no word to offer on the great issues of our time, the issues of peace and economic reconstruction? The question is a just one, and I cannot any longer evade it. Yet it places me in an obvious difficulty. The measures which, I believe, would be necessary to make our civilization at once tolerably secure and tolerable to its members suffer from two disabilities: (1) They

THE LARGER ISSUES

would take a long time to explain, and (2) they are at the moment quite impracticable. To say, for example, that I want an international world State to which the separate sovereignties of the irritable parochial bodies we call nations should be subordinated, that I believe in the abolition of all national military forces and the policing of the world by a small international force, that I consider complete disarmament by national States to be the best means of achieving this end, and that I would have used by dictatorial power to make the nation that I controlled set an example; to say that I believe that money as at present earned and distributed is a curse, the source of injustice, the generator of discontent and the breeder of snobbery, that it elevates the unworthy into positions of power and prominence to which neither their brains, their talents nor their characters entitle them, as surely as it consigns the best citizens to positions of undeserved obscurity, and, therefore, of limited usefulness; and to conclude that the only tolerable economic basis of my dictatorship would be the possession of equal incomes by all citizens, under a system whereby incomes were guaranteed by the State irrespective of services rendered by the recipients—to say these things and many others of the same kind, announcing ends which are as desirable as they are remote and reforms which are as drastic as they are impracticable, is, I realize, to make a gesture which can have little significance to the readers of this

THE DICTATOR RESIGNS

book. It will by now have become sufficiently obvious to the discerning reader that, though I am unlike most Christians in the sense that I do not believe that Christ was a supernatural personage, the son of God, I am even more unlike them in the sense that I do believe that most of what He said was sound common sense intended for our practical guidance in this world, and that it is only when people can be induced to pay some attention to it, that society will become worth living in. No State has ever conducted its public business for five minutes on the assumption that Christ meant any of the things he said, or that, if He did, they were meant to be taken seriously.

POLITICAL CHRISTIANITY

For consider what taking Christ seriously would involve. (I mention these matters here because they are all such as would have formed part of my long-term policy, had I been successful in inducing my conscience to permit me to become dictator.) It would mean treating Christ as primarily a great teacher and preacher of conduct, expounding doctrines of compelling force and originality; as one who, despising ritual and ceremony, laid stress upon what men *do*; as an internationalist holding earthly kingdoms of no account in comparison with the Kingdom of Heaven, and a Communist advocating the widening of the private family to

THE LARGER ISSUES

include the whole family of mankind; as a humanitarian denouncing punishment, crying for mercy instead of vengeance, and insisting, if only as a utilitarian measure, on counteracting evil not with a contrary evil but with good. It would involve above all treating Him as a Socialist, who insists on the organic conception of society and affirms that we are members of one another in so intimate a sense that the misery and degradation of one are the misery and degradation of all. What follows? It follows that to take Christ seriously entails the disbanding of our armies, the scrapping of our navies, the sacking of our judges and our lawyers, the closing of our prisons and the provision of equal incomes for all irrespective of work done.

To say that I should treat these things as ends and should judge the progress of any society by the extent of its advance towards their realization would not, I fear, be very helpful to my readers, most of whom, in spite of their official acceptance of Christianity, remain completely unconvinced as to the desirability of even trying to live in the way which Christ enjoined, and completely sceptical as to the practicability of any of the measures which a determination to realize Christianity in practice would entail. It is, of course, useless for me to try in a few pages to produce a change of values for which hundreds of thousands of preachers from hundreds of thousands of pulpits have pleaded for over two thousand years in vain. Nor shall

THE DICTATOR RESIGNS

I attempt the task. I content myself with placing it on record that, had I not resigned my dictatorship, my relations with other powers, my enactments in the economic sphere, my amendments of the criminal law and my attitude to judges, lawyers, soldiers, and sailors would have been dictated by a determination to find out whether Christ was not right after all, and whether an experiment in political and social Christianity might not, therefore, have been practicable.

So much for my long-term policy! Its difficulties and disabilities are obvious. Its measures certainly appear to be impracticable; they are difficult to explain shortly, and there is very little hope that in the present state of the world my readers would be convinced by my explanation. Nevertheless, I am persuaded that, if civilization is to survive, the society of the future must follow much more closely the lines laid down by Jesus Christ, than any professedly Christian society of the past or of the present.

SHORT-TERM MEASURES

I turn, then, to my short-term policy. Here the opposite difficulty arises. There are a number of measures which, if taken here and now, would, I believe, enormously ameliorate the existing situation and enable a resolute ruler gradually to direct it towards the ultimate objectives which I have just

THE LARGER ISSUES

described. These measures are, however, in no sense original, and would be largely taken from the programmes of existing political parties and societies.

Some years ago I helped to found an organization called The Federation of Progressive Societies and Individuals. Impatient with the vagueness which hangs like a cloud over the pronouncements of most of the existing bodies for world regeneration, we drew up a programme of specific proposals in support of which we hoped to enlist and unite the progressive opinion which is now disorganized and disunited in a hundred and one isolated and impotent little societies. The attempt to unite progressive societies failed,—too many vested interests were involved: there were too many cocks each crowing happily away on his own small dunghill—but I still believe that the programme which I then helped to draw up was a good one, and that society would be immeasurably the gainer, if it were put into practice. Some of its proposals—the abrogation of the ferocious penalties prescribed by our sex laws, the measures for the preservation of rural England, the proposals for the treatment of criminals, the advocacy of freedom of thought and speech and writing—I have already touched upon. What remains? There are a number of measures in the economic sphere. A bald list of these would, I am only too conscious, have no interest for the reader. It would not be original and it would not be in any sense individual.

THE DICTATOR RESIGNS

Nor would he be interested to hear that I support and should wish to see carried out most of the proposals contained in the pamphlet *Socialism and Peace*, the Labour Party *Programme of Action* published at the end of 1934; that I would, for example, by passing a Peace Act of Parliament, 'make it impossible for any British Government to use force as an instrument of national policy, without violating the law of the land', that I would 'create machinery and obligations for settling all international disputes by pacific methods', that I would 'abolish the private manufacture and sale of armaments', that I would 'abolish national air forces, internationalize civil aviation and create an international air force', that I would raise the school-leaving age, abolish the Means Test, extend the provisions for pensions and so take the older workers out of industry, that I would call an international conference with the object of putting forward proposals here and now for an equitable distribution among the nations of the world of the raw materials of the world, particularly its oil and its coal, and that I would at the same time set another international conference to work to consider the optimum population for each State having regard to its resources in territory and raw materials, and then endeavour to convince each Government of its paramount obligation in the interests of world peace to see that its population did not exceed this optimum figure.

THE LARGER ISSUES

THE EDUCATION OF THE PUBLIC

Upon this last proposal, in particular, the reader will no doubt be only too ready to comment that it is enormously in advance of world opinion, that it cannot in any event be carried through in the absence of an international Government, and that it is strictly incompatible with the determination of sovereign States to be the sole arbiters of their own destinies. Admitted! But then I have already undertaken the task of educating public opinion and included international government among my ultimate objectives. Why should I not, as a partial instalment of this education of the public, make proposals whose realization entails a public opinion which is already educated? If I can provide good reasons for showing that these things will in the long run contribute to the happiness of human beings,—and this, it will be remembered, I have already laid down as the sole standard by which we are entitled to judge the value of any political measure—then I believe that my reasons will prevail to the extent of inducing human beings to take those steps which will make them happy. If you say that this belief is indistinguishable from simple faith, I am compelled to agree. It is part of my faith in the ultimate rationality of our species.¹

¹ See pp. 10-13.

THE DICTATOR RESIGNS

MAKING A CLEAN BREAST OF SOCIALISM

I could continue to enumerate the admirable proposals made by the Labour Party for improving the well-being of the people of this country, the restoration of Trade Union rights, the extension of the Factories and Workshops Acts, the extension of the Trade Boards Acts, the establishment of a forty-hour and five-day week, the destruction of slums, the building of blocks of working-class flats on the best continental models whose inhabitants would have the country at their doors, cultivate allotments within a stone's throw of their homes, and live within another stone's throw of their work, instead of sprawling in their little brick boxes, as they now do, over such a vast area that they must travel for two hours a day to find either their work in the town or their recreation in the country. I could add to this list the provision of a year's holiday with pay for all workers who have reached the age of forty, the adequate maintenance by the State of all unemployed poor, the imposition of disabling taxes upon the unemployed rich. My long-term policy, it will be remembered, aims at establishing equal incomes for all, and any small redistribution that I could effect as part of my short-term policy, besides enabling me to finance my measures for the immediate increase of human happiness would bring my ultimate objective of an economically equalitarian society nearer realization.

THE LARGER ISSUES

In fact—and I may as well make a clean breast of the avowal—I should carry out most of those measures which are ordinarily regarded as constituting Socialism. I should, therefore, nationalize coal and transport, turn the other key industries of the country into public corporations, set up a Board for the control of investments, nationalize the banks and regulate the flow of credit. The tale is familiar enough and I need not tell it again here. As I have already hinted, I am no economist and I should have been content, at any rate at first, to put into practice the measures contained in the Labour Party's *Programme of Action*. But my readers will not thank me for writing them down here.

There is, however, one issue of current policy which gives me more cause for regret that I am not after all to be a dictator than any other single circumstance. For on this issue I could, as dictator, have taken an entirely different line from that which my present role as an uninfluential citizen of a large democratic community imposes upon me. This is the issue of peace. And my regret springs from my conviction that it is only if I were in possession of absolute power, that I should be able to carry out a policy which is, in my view, sufficiently drastic to bring peace to the world, yet sufficiently unpopular to require a dictator to enforce.

THE DICTATOR RESIGNS

PACIFIST CONVICTIONS

Like many contemporary pacifists I find myself in the post-war world in a somewhat equivocal position. I regard war as the ultimate evil and hold that in comparison with the physical suffering and moral degradation which it entails, considerations of national honour and prestige, real or fancied, are of infinitesimal unimportance. That portions of the map should be painted red, that Germany should have colonies, that white Italians should demonstrate their superiority in destructiveness to black Abyssinians, that two provinces should belong to France, or alternatively that they should belong to Germany, that a tract of jungle should be deemed to be Bolivian or Paraguayan—these things and a thousand like them for which men have contended with so much ardour, for which they have suffered so much misery, do not seem to me to be worth a single man's blood or a single woman's tears. They are will-o'-the-wisps which our species, bemused with the false beliefs born of its stupidity, and bedevilled with the folly bred by its acquisitiveness, pursues to its own destruction.

Now, I have already said that I believe the precepts of Christ's Sermon on the Mount to be practical politics. When you are confronted with an angry man, it is actually safer to turn the other cheek than to draw your revolver. The supreme merit of turning the other cheek is that nobody can

THE LARGER ISSUES

bring himself to hit you on it. It is prudent to be unarmed, for, if you are without weapons of offence, you cannot plausibly be represented as an object of fear to those whom fear would make your enemies. If, caring as I do for civilization, knowing as I do how civilization is endangered by the gangster elements in human nature which thrive on fear and aggression, realizing how these elements are enfranchised by war, and wanting passionately, to live a nice quiet life without alarms and excursions, I were to be asked before birth to decide to which country I should choose to belong as affording the best chance of dying peacefully in bed, my choice would fall upon one of the smaller Scandinavian countries. Denmark and Norway have not thought it necessary to make elaborate preparations for their defence: rightly, since their record in the matter of freedom from war is far superior to that of heavily defended countries such as France, Austria, or Germany, which throughout their history have been so apprehensive of enemies that the armaments which they have piled up in their defence have never seemed to them to be strong enough, yet so unfortunate that they have rarely been successful in avoiding occasions for their use.

I have often wondered why these undefended nations are so secure. Perhaps they are too small for anybody to think it worth while to attack them. Perhaps they can rely on no large Power permitting

THE DICTATOR RESIGNS

another Power to absorb them, or perhaps, as I prefer to think, there is something in what Christ said after all. Whatever the reason, those who desire neither to kill nor to be killed, to maim nor to be maimed, will be well advised in future to contrive to get born as citizens of small States.

THE POLICY OF UNILATERAL DISARMAMENT

It is a clear deduction from the above that complete and unilateral disarmament is the foundation of a successful peace policy. If England were to disarm here and now, I do not believe that she would be attacked. Moreover, the force of her example in a world ridden with suspicion and maddened by fear would be incalculable. We might, it is true, lose some parts of our Empire, those parts which we hold down by force. But I do not wish to maintain the British Empire by force. Nor do I think that it is anything wicked in the inhabitants of a territory hitherto belonging to one country, if they wish to secede and to achieve independence as inhabitants of a separate country. In any event, no imperial considerations weigh for me in the scale against the suffering of a single individual. Complete unilateral disarmament on the part of this country is, therefore, in my view not only good morals but sound sense. Nevertheless, it has not, as the world stands to-day, the remotest chance of being adopted. Schoolboys

THE LARGER ISSUES

continue to write essays on the folly of *si vis pacem bellum para*, and even the public, as the results of the Peace Ballot sufficiently demonstrated, is at last beginning to realize that in the modern world safety is not to be purchased by national armaments. Nevertheless, the public is very far indeed from being prepared to accept the logical implications of this realization. It continues to authorize preparations for war; it still votes for the piling up of arms; it still demands aeroplanes and battleships and tanks. And it does these things because in the last resort people are still unregenerate worshippers of force. It is upon force that they rely for their safety, and any attempt to persuade them to carry into practice the precepts of the teacher whose divinity they accept and whose teachings they profess, is contemptuously dismissed as lily-livered treachery.

In spite of his reliance upon force, the contemporary Englishman is seriously disquieted. He knows that another war is being visibly prepared, and he knows with what weapons it is likely to be waged. The conquest of the air has abolished the English Channel, and there is, as he has been taught to realize, no escape from the bomber, no defence against gas. These facts have at last penetrated the public consciousness and filled people with a profound alarm. As a consequence, they are preoccupied as never before with questions of foreign policy. How, they ask, can occasions for

THE DICTATOR RESIGNS

the employment of these terrific preparations for slaughter be avoided? How is war to be staved off? What, in a word, can we do to avoid destruction?

THE CHALLENGE TO THE PACIFIST

These questions are pressed upon politicians and writers of every school of thought, and, inevitably, they are pressed most insistently upon the pacifists. Now, it is no use for the pacifist to reply: 'Give up your guns and planes and battleships. Surrender those means of protection which are no protection.' For this advice, as I have already emphasized, the man in the street is in no mood to accept. Nevertheless, it is clearly incumbent upon him, as one who has given time and attention to questions of peace and war, to provide *some* answer which is not too remote from practical possibilities to win a chance of acceptance.

Now the answer which I, in common with many of those who share my general outlook, am increasingly disposed to give, is this: 'Since you are resolved to rely upon force, your concern should be to see that the occasions for its use are reduced to a minimum and to circumscribe the area over which it operates. You want, in the first place, to prevent force from being used at all, and you want, in the second, to ensure that, if it is used in a particular case, it will not provoke a general conflagration. Very well, then, you must adopt the

THE LARGER ISSUES

method which has proved successful in eliminating the use of force in personal disputes; in other words, you must pool the force of all, so that the force of all may be used against whomsoever threatens the peace of any. The use of force very largely disappeared in the relations between man and man when society, refusing any longer to allow the disputants in a quarrel to be both judge and jury in their own cause, decided to arm not the litigants but the law. Remember with what difficulty this step was accomplished, how hardly and precariously the State acquired enough pooled force to restrain and presently to eliminate the private force of individuals, how passionately men clung to their weapons, with what indignant protests they resisted the abolition of duelling. Nevertheless, duelling was in fact abolished, violence between individuals has largely disappeared; citizens, except in America, go to law instead of whipping out their revolvers, and life has been made reasonably secure for private persons. An exactly similar step remains to be taken in restraint of the use of force between nations. Nations, like individuals, must be induced to pool their private forces, to give up their claim to act as judges and juries in their own cause and to contribute their quotas to a world force centred, let us say, at Geneva, entrusted with the task of keeping the world by bringing the pooled force upon the aggressor against the

THE DICTATOR RESIGNS

THE TASK OF THIS GENERATION

I do not wish to underestimate the difficulty of this task, or to claim for such poor attempts as have been made to carry it out a greater success than the facts warrant. The task of our generation is to effect a transition to a larger unit of social organization, a transition comparable to that which took place when warring tribes were welded together into nation-states. States will not readily forgo the resort to force to achieve their ends, when they believe that the preponderance is on their own side; they will not readily surrender their sovereignties. Nevertheless, it is reasonably clear that, unless the foundations of a new international organization can be laid by this generation they must be postponed for an incalculable period. The next European war will probably mean the end of our civilization, and the end, therefore, of any attempt to regulate the collective life of mankind. Now, under modern conditions mankind, if it continues to live unregulated, will destroy itself.

THE PACIFIST'S DILEMMA

For no one, however, is the policy of collective security which I have just outlined more difficult of acceptance than it is for the pacifist. For the policy involves the willingness to use force against an aggressor State. It involves, that is to say, a

THE LARGER ISSUES

willingness in the last resort to blind, burn, mutilate, choke, and disembowel the innocent citizens of the aggressor country. Now, it may well be argued that the agony of coughing up shreds of poisoned lung is not diminished by reason of the fact that the poison gas emanated from bombs dropped by an international air force seeking to maintain world peace. The policy of collective security with its threat of sanctions in the background, can, therefore, for the pacifist never be more than a second best. He is driven to advocate it reluctantly, because he is asked for a policy in a world which is too stupid to forgo the preparation of force and too fearful to forgo its use when prepared, and must needs, therefore, put to himself the question: Since force is to be used whether I like it or not, how can the evils of its use be reduced to a minimum? Now, I maintain that it is right for a lover of peace living in a democracy to advocate that policy which satisfies the two conditions of being both practicable and reasonably efficacious, even if it is a policy which he personally would not, if he were entrusted with power, pursue. Now, a dictator is a person who, *ex hypothesi*, is entrusted with power. It has, indeed, been my assumption throughout that the power over men's minds with which a completely unscrupulous dictator's control of the avenues of propaganda invests him will enable him to win them to his will. Let it be granted, then,—and this is the last occasion on which I shall play

THE DICTATOR RESIGNS

with this dream—that I am for the moment to be envisaged not as a humble member of a democracy, trying to persuade people to adopt the best of a number of bad policies, because it is the only one which he has any hope of inducing them to accept, but as a powerful and all compelling dictator prepared to use his power to enforce those policies that he believes to be best. My course would be clear. I should abandon my somewhat equivocal advocacy of the policy of collective security, entailing in the last resort the use of force against the aggressor, and come out in my true pacifist colours with a policy of total and immediate disarmament. I believe that such a policy would save the world. It would, indeed, almost justify my dictatorship—almost, but not quite.

12213

